The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

PEDESTAL POLITICS

On February 16, when the United Democratic Front ostracized Winnie Mandela for condoning the violence of her bodyguards, network news discovered that it is, after all, possible to film the activities of black leaders in South Africa. The story played as the tragedy of a fallen idol. But who put Winnie Mandela on a pedestal in the first place?

Years of house arrest and detention gave Nelson Mandela's wife exceptional moral stature, and in their rash search for heroes and heroines, some outside South Africa adopted her as emblem and substitute for the movement she represented. What was reported of her life in recent years was selective: the apparent endorsement of "necklacing"; the palatial house in Soweto; the exploitation of the Mandela name. Because the name and the mass movement had become interchangeable, the movement suffered when the symbol was tarnished—even when the townships had begun to question whether the symbol might have become a liability.

What emerges from the sad episode of Winnie Mandela's disgrace is the dignity of the U.D.F., its regard for the principles of accountability, its refusal to condone terror. Under the U.D.F. umbrella, a deeper, more diverse struggle has taken shape in the past two years: a three-day national strike last June; the municipal election boycott in October; rent protests; and the recent hunger strike that forced the release of 100 detainees.

The U.S. media, which has ignored most of this, have "had an effect of giving off false impressions of the South African reality," U.D.F. leader Murphy Morobe told *The Nation* recently. A distinguished exception is *South Africa Now*, which shows each week on PBS how the fight against apartheid goes on at every level in the townships. It is still not too late to start the other, bigger cameras rolling.

SALMAN RUSHDIE
George Black
Edward Sorel
Christopher Hitchens
John Leonard

EUROPEAN HUSTLERS
Daniel Singer

ARGENTINA'S DIRTY SECRETS
Martin Edwin Andersen

ETHNOGRAPHS
Micaela di Leonardo

'HIGH HOPES'
Stuart Klawans

A BILLION-DOLLAR STORY

THE TRIAL OF DONALD AND SI NEWHOUSE

RICHARD POLLAK

The U.S. Tax Court is only a short cab ride from the Washington bureau of Newhouse Newspapers, but the dedicated news hounds there employed somehow have managed to miss the compelling tale just concluded in the courtroom. This demonstrates puzzling news judgment, for the several million readers of the chain's twenty-six newspapers doubtless would find instructive an exploration of the government's accusation that the Newhouse family has dodged more than $1 billion in taxes.

Normally, so many allegedly delinquent digits trailing behind such high rollers would bring reporters running like lottery winners, but the rest of the press also has studiously ignored or played down the Newhouse trial. Thus, a wide public has been deprived of many useful revelations, among them Samuel Newhouse Jr.'s insistence that it is difficult to explain how the family made business decisions because it is "a little bit like trying to describe love." In fact, a certain amorousness does surface in the court papers from time to time, notably when they record intrafamily largesse: One year, for example, Donald Newhouse received a salary of $397,839, plus dividends totaling more than $650,000, an amount he regards as "nominal."

The unpleasantness between the Newhouse family and the Internal Revenue Service may constitute the biggest estate tax case ever to come before the court. Even so, I probably would never have noticed it had I not been sensitized over the years by a press ever

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LETTERS.

FOR A PEACEFARE STATE

Northridge, Calif.

Amen to Jim Hightower's decision to build a "broad-based, grass-roots populist politics" rather than run for national office ["Raising Issues, Hope and Hell," Feb. 6]. His prescription for building on involvement in state and local issues makes sense and has an honorable history. But the national issue which must undergird any progressive movement must be the transformation of our destructive, potentially omnicidal warfare state to a law-abiding, life-enhancing peacefare state. Without such a transformation, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union nor the world community can effectively address worldwide economic and environmental crises, reduce the probability of armed conflict exploding in nuclear apocalypse or correct the grotesque maldistribution of power in the superpowers and in the Third World.

The manifesto or platform for such a transformation exists. It is the Citizens Agenda for Common Security and Disarmament by the Year 2000. This is the product of two years of meetings of the national staffs of major peace and social justice organizations including SANE/Freeze, the American Friends Service Committee National Disarmament Program and the Rainbow Coalition.

The fundamental principle of "common security," Citizen Agenda's central concept, is that no nation can attain security by making another nation insecure. Policy based on common security requires real steps toward nuclear and conventional disarmament, a halt to military intervention, joint environmental protection, economic and social development and active conflict resolution. Citizens Agenda is being circulated in petition form to be presented to President Bush on tax day, April 15. We and our organizations can give birth to a broad movement to transform our warfare state by endorsing and circulating Citizens Agenda petitions. For petitions and information write to Disarmament 2000/Common Security Working Group, 1213 Race Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107; (214) 563-7110. *Nicholas V. Seidita*

ONE LAST BEQUEST

Easton, Pa.

"Playing Down Unemployment" by William Serrin in the January 23 issue of *The Nation* hit home hard. I guess even I, the ever-skeptical, had been lulled into a false sense of security recently. Once again unemployment has struck our household, but this time we have more to lose.

My husband has searched unsuccessfully for work, along with thousands of others here in the Lehigh Valley. Appointments must be arranged just to fill out an application. Jobs listed in the local papers are often filled by the time we get the paper and make a phone call. Even Kelly Temporaries has changed. My husband had used them in the past to find work but when he went down to sign up recently the same woman who was casually dressed just two years ago now wore a business suit. This same woman who sat down with you to discuss work now led him to a cubicle, inserted a video into a monitor and left him to watch a Kelly promo. After using over an hour of his time, she told him they had no work at this time. In the last ten days my husband has made twenty phone calls, filled out twenty-two applications and had ten interviews, contacting a total of forty-two employers. The era of the skilled craftsman is gone. Meanwhile the Lehigh Valley Dairy just laid off all but fifty of its 270 employees, Lehigh Valley Bank announced it was laying off workers, Mack is long gone and Bethlehem Steel is a corporate shell.

Food service, health care and office work is the trend. My husband applied to a pimply faced teen-ager who managed a pizza shop but, needless to say, at age 34 he was considered too old. After spending five years working and sacrificing to earn an associate degree in liberal arts, I have returned to nursing against my physician's advice and without his knowledge because I could not find other work. I simply lie on my applications, because if they knew of my condition they would not hire me. Now licensed practical nurses are making good wages, but even so I work three part-time jobs that don't begin to cover just living expenses. How long I can keep this up without causing further injury and more medical costs is the $64,000 question, literally.

We are the people William Serrin wrote about: underemployed, unemployed, partially disabled and everywhere in between. We are falling through the cracks and soon off the edge. We continue to fight, and we will not return to public assistance. I thank *The Nation* for its honest information. Serrin has hit the reality, and it is us and many, many others worse off than we are. We now stand before four more years of the Reagan legacy. We are doomed. *DeNise Watkins-Hamilton*

MY REVIEWER AND OTHER ANIMALS

Hayward, Calif.

Harriet Ritvo's review of my book *Animal Liberators* ["With Friends Like These," Dec. 12, 1988] contains a number of puzzling inaccuracies, some large and some small. Ritvo contends that I am biased against the animal rights movement and that I attribute "reason" and "rationality" only to the research community. The book clearly states that no side in the debate over animal research has a monopoly on reason.

Rather, the book attempts to go beyond this common reduction of issues in the animal rights debate to a cultural analysis of conflicting contemporary interpretations of the human/nonhuman boundary. The two "sides" in the current antivivisection debate cannot be understood only in terms of which offers the most rational arguments. Opponents in this battle represent two contending metaphysics that agree on too little common ground to communicate.

Another disturbing misstatement is Ritvo's contention that I treat the Cruelty to Animals Act of 1876 as a "triumph for the antivivisection movement." On the contrary, the act was perceived as a terrible defeat by the antivivisectionists, and this is stated in the book ("The antivivisectionists felt completely betrayed and fought the Act aggressively for the next decade," p. 40).

I could go on, but suggest instead that people interested in the movement read *Animal Liberators* as well as other books on the subject. The most unfortunate aspect of Ritvo's review is that she took up so much valuable space without once addressing the central issues raised in the book: shifting cosmological boundaries in Western culture, and the relationship between animal rights, radical feminism and elements of the ecology movement in their shared responses to technological incursions of nature. I'm left wondering if Ritvo actually read my book; perhaps she had her own "submerged" agenda underlying this ax-grinding review.

Susan Sperling

RITVO REPLIES

Cambridge, Mass.

Unfortunately, stating one's goals is not the same thing as achieving them. Asserting one's objectivity does not mean that one has demonstrated it. And recognizing that reductionism is a trap does not necessarily prevent one from falling into it. Susan Sperling and I agree that she started out with a good idea; we disagree about the relationship of that idea to *Animal Liberators*. "Inaccuracies" is an odd way to characterize such differences of opinion. *Harriet Ritvo*

CORRECTION

The second sentence of the third paragraph of Andrew Kopkind's reply to Harold Weisberg ("Letters," Feb. 20) was incorrectly altered during the editing process. Referring to John F. Kennedy's Vietnam policy, it should have read: "He planned to reduce his troops, as Lyndon Johnson did right up to the end, as soon as the 'strategic hamlets' were *unnecessary*, the natives were pacified and the enemy was on the run."

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EDITORIALS.

New North Wind?

During the legal maneuvers that preceded Oliver North's trial, the former Marine signaled that the Congressional Iran/*contra* committees may have missed a significant aspect of the scandal. North's hint came as the Justice Department scrambled to limit his ability to use classified information in his defense.

Part of what the Justice Department wants to cloak is not really secret. It is already known that North and his cohorts, while conducting their covert war in Central America, enlisted the aid of other countries. Although the identities of these nations were routinely reported by the media during the hearings, the White House insisted that they be referred to only by numbers.

North suggests he could do much more than correlate the names with the numbers. In a pretrial motion his lawyers asserted, "At the heart of his case are the quid pro quo and third country arrangements with which the Reagan Admin-

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istration obtained military support" for the *contras*. Among the third country arrangements already revealed were El Salvador's providing a home base for North's *contra* resupply network and Saudi Arabia's pumping of millions of petrodollars to the "resistance." Much more intriguing is the claim about quid pro quos. This would entail real (and embarrassing) secrets and give the Justice Department good cause for becoming apoplectic about the trial. The existence of more extensive, officially sanctioned, symbiotic agreements would mean that the United States engaged in secret diplomacy, establishing foreign policy on the basis of favor trading.

North and his lawyers may, of course, be bluffing, but at least one moment during the hearings suggested they are not. Testimony in closed sessions with C.I.A. officials indicated that the agency had solicited aid for the *contras* from South Africa. At one of these hearings, according to the transcript, Representative Edward Boland noted that the scheme called for Pretoria's quid, assistance for the *contras*, "in exchange for—." White House censors deleted the quo. That's the type of blank North may be threatening to fill in. He might be able to do the same concerning Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega's U.S. connection.

North could disclose plenty of other secrets as well. Some involving so-called antiterrorism programs or hostage-rescue plans could compromise "sources and methods," the twin towers of intelligence, and the Justice Department arguably may have reason to protect them. But others may simply raise too many awkward questions. Here's an example: The committees' investigators discovered, according to a former staff member, a memo that North wrote to national security adviser Robert McFarlane proposing that President Reagan ask Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher to use covert-action funds to finance the *contras*. The great advantage was that Thatcher would not have to reveal to Parliament how she had spent the money. The paper trail did not indicate whether Reagan or anyone else ever made such a request. The White House refused to declassify the memo, the former aide notes, and the committees sat on it.

The compromise on classified documents reached by the Justice Department and independent counsel Lawrence Walsh will serve to keep the courtroom release of new secrets to a minimum. But a court is not the ideal forum for investigating whether the executive branch entered into secret pacts with foreign powers; that's the duty of Congress. It's doubtful, however, that Congress will revisit the ancient history of the Iran/*contra* scandal—even if North's filings suggest questions about the current status of deals that may have been cut.

Tilters

In these times, as Murdoch, Maxwell & Co. gobble up media companies worldwide, it is reassuring to note some anniversaries marking sustained resistance to this culturally homogenizing trend.

The Washington Monthly, which believes that there's nothing wrong with capitalism that a little neoliberal tinkering can't fix, recently began celebrating twenty years of memorandum mocking, culture-of-bureaucracy analyzing and Washington windmill tilting. Even though the best and the brightest of editor in chief Charles Peters's amazing alumni would chip away at some of our favorite constitutional amendments (see Mickey Kaus on the Fifth) and are too suspicious of government subsidies for their own good (see Michael Kinsley on why the Postal Service should end its special rates for mailing journals of opinion), we continue to find *The Monthly* an indispensable decoder and deconstructer of the men and myths governing our nation's capital. (Why not help the magazine celebrate its birthday by sending $33 for a year's subscription to 1611 Connecticut Avenue N.W., Washington, DC 20009.)

Meanwhile, *Monthly Review*, which believes that there's something endemic to capitalism that no amount of Band-Aiding—neoliberal, liberal or otherwise—can cure, gears up to celebrate its first forty years as an independent socialist magazine. Edited by Paul Sweezy and Harry Magdoff, the current number begins typically by arguing convincingly that the most important fact about the United States today is that it "could easily produce at least 50 percent more than it is now producing." It derives what it terms this "conservative" estimate based on our wartime experience, the labor power currently available but unused, and the productive capacity already in place. (To find out more and get on *Monthly Review*'s subscription list in time for May's gala fortieth anniversary issue, send $22 to the Monthly Review Foundation, 122 West 27th Street, New York, NY 10001.)

Then there is Pacifica Radio, the oldest listener-sponsored radio network in the country, which in Berkeley this April and Washington this fall will celebrate *its* fortieth birthday. Pacifica is a forum for radical, alternative and other unheard news and voices.

Add to these such new entries in the independent progressive ranks as *Zeta* and *Tikkun* (which has entered stage-left to join *Present Tense* as a liberal Jewish counterpoint to the neoconservative *Commentary*), and one is again reminded that often dissonant voices can together constitute a chorus against the monotony of official opinion. As McCarthy in William Saroyan's *The Time of Your Life* observed many years ago, "The thing to do is to have more magazines. Hundreds of them. *Thousands.*" (And listener-sponsored radio and citizen-access cable TV, too.)

'Shame'

The same qualities that make Salman Rushdie a mortal threat to Islam (at least as defined by Ayatollah Khomeini) have also done nothing to endear him to the government of Britain, where he lives. It is not just that Rushdie is publicly known as a man of the left and an avowed opponent of Margaret Thatcher's attacks on the free circulation of ideas. It is the very stuff of his fiction that makes him dangerous. His three major novels—*Midnight's Children*, *Shame* and now *The*

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Satanic Verses—deal with the messy detritus of British colonialism and the stresses faced by anyone trying to put down cultural roots in the fragmented modern world. A writer who thinks about such dissonant themes will not sit easily with a government that in its own fashion—modest, perhaps, in comparison with the Ayatollah's—lays claim to absolute truth and finds dissent insufferable.

Britain, which reopened its embassy in Teheran in December, has been at the head of the queue of Iran's aspiring business partners. The interest is hardly new. In the good old days of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company, long before the United States became the Great Satan, Britain played the role to the hilt. The handover of wealth, Lord Curzon wrote in 1892 in his *Persia and the Persian Question*, was "the most complete and extraordinary surrender of the entire industrial resources of a kingdom into foreign hands that has probably ever been dreamed of."

From the Falklands to Moscow, Thatcher has displayed an appetite for a renewed global role. The old imperial lion has been silent East of Suez since 1971, when it withdrew its forces from the Persian Gulf. But the power vacuum produced by the Soviet pullout from Afghanistan, the end of the gulf war and the decline of U.S. influence in the region have lured Britain back. British exporters stand patriotically ready to reap the benefits of postwar Iran, a country of ruined harbors and factories, multibillion-dollar reconstruction needs and depleted weapons stockpiles.

This commercial self-interest, together with the attempt to extricate businessman Roger Cooper (jailed on espionage charges) and the fear of complicating the release of three British hostages in Lebanon helps explain the paralysis that gripped the Foreign Office after Khomeini's initial threat to have Rushdie liquidated. The Foreign Secretary, Sir Geoffrey Howe, took three days to issue his tepid first statement, with not a mention of the central issue: Rushdie's right to express his ideas freely. For another three days, both the Ayatollah and the Foreign Office left Rushdie to twist in the wind. London merely suspended the upgrading of its new embassy; only on February 20, after Khomeini elaborated on his original threat, were British emissaries withdrawn.

This is not the first time that British diplomats have equivocated in similar circumstances. In 1980, when the TV documentary *Death of a Princess* provoked a rupture with Saudi Arabia, Howe's predecessor, Lord Carrington, rushed to condemn it and apologize to the Saudis. Again, not a word on the filmmakers' rights. Sadly, both episodes inflame the prejudice that all of Islam can be equated with its crudest caricatures: in the *Princess* case, the punitive extremes of Islamic law; in the Rushdie case, the idea that Khomeini's demented rhetoric speaks for an entire religion. This suits the Ayatollah very well. For his own obvious reasons, he has used Rushdie as a target of convenience to silence other Iranian leaders who have favored an opening to Britain and other Western countries.

Since the cease-fire with Iraq, the ugly side of the Iranian revolution has been much in evidence, and the slaughter of thousands of dissidents, political prisoners and Kurds appears more sinister with the sense that Khomeini has become enfeebled and erratic, as well as vindictive. Yet for all this, there was barely a criticism of the death threat that was not preceded by lengthy throat-clearing about the distress the novel must surely have caused. To avoid offending Islamic sensibilities, the British bookstore chain W.H. Smith pulled copies from its shelves in January, after the first burnings of *The Satanic Verses* in the heavily Moslem city of Bradford. Labor Party members of Parliament, driven no doubt by their fears of losing the "Asian vote," proposed that the blasphemy law be expanded to protect Islam as well as Christianity. These actions may masquerade as multicultural tolerance, but they are only another form of appeasement.

The setting for Salman Rushdie's fiction is a society, Britain, in which coherent moral values have collapsed and group identity is uncertain. What then remains? Little, it seems, but commercial opportunism, vulgar self-interest and crude stereotypes, with the writer's right to a questioning, ambiguous voice drowned out in the din. GEORGE BLACK

G.O.P. Formula

Commerce Secretary Robert Mosbacher Sr., who was George Bush's campaign finance chair, recently complained that G.O.P. fund-raisers were not being sufficiently thanked with political appointments. That seems something of an unnecessary bleat, considering the case of Bruce Gelb.

The President has nominated Gelb, who like Bush graduated from Andover and Yale University, to succeed Charles Wick as director of the United States Information Agency. Gelb's principal qualifications appear to be that, as co-chair of the New York state finance committee, he raised $3 million for the campaign.

In theory, at least, the U.S.I.A. and its radio amplification program, the Voice of America, are primarily journalistic enterprises designed to tell the world about our great land. Gelb has no background in news; his lasting contribution to communications was achieved in the late 1950s, when he pushed hair coloring as advertising manager for Clairol, run at the time by his father.

In 1959, Clairol was sold to Bristol-Myers and the Gelb family gradually assumed control of the parent company. In 1976, Bristol-Myers was hit by a lawsuit from the Sisters of the Precious Blood over sales of infant formula in the Third World. A 1977 memorandum of law submitted by the Sisters revealed three outright lies in a Bristol-Myers proxy statement defending its formula sales. The company also disseminated a *Fortune* article that described church groups protesting the sales as "Marxists marching under the banner of Christ." (The suit was settled out of court.)

Bristol-Myers denies that Gelb was responsible for marketing the infant formula, which was under the nominal control of the company's Mead Johnson division, and technically that is true. Gelb didn't rise to the post of corporate executive vice president until 1977. But surely he must have known about the decision taken by this family-run company. What

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did Gelb think then of the infant formula sale, and, of greater import for the Senators who will soon quiz him at the confirmation hearings, what does he think of it now?

Another fund-raiser looking for a job in the Bush Administration's U.S.I.A. is Richard Carlson, who wants to stay on as head of the Voice of America. An early Bush supporter, Carlson raised some $18,000 for the presidential campaign. According to an article by V.O.A. staff member Carolyn Weaver in the *Columbia Journalism Review* for November/December 1988, Carlson helped subvert the agency's charter by employing the radio network to pass intelligence messages, including at least one from Oliver North.

Both Gelb and Carlson are the wrong voices for America.

ALEX DUBRO

Alex Dubro, the author of Yakuza *(Collier-McMillan), a study of Japanese organized crime, is president of the National Writers Union.*

UNCIVIL LIBERTIES.

CALVIN TRILLIN

According to a front-page story in *The New York Times*, the World Wrestling Federation has asked the New Jersey Senate to pass a law defining professional wrestling as "an activity in which participants struggle hand-in-hand primarily for the purpose of providing entertainment to spectators rather than conducting a bona fide athletic contest." This is more or less the equivalent of the toy industry asking a state legislature to define Santa Claus as "a longstanding but purely fictional parental device." In other words, however strong the factual basis for the sentiment expressed, is it the sort of thing we ought to be discussing openly in the newspapers?

For instance, there's the matter of my Aunt Flo in Kansas City. Aunt Flo happens to find great happiness in hating a professional wrestler who's called something like The Beast From the Primordial Goo (I can't remember the exact name, but I do know she calls him Goo for short). She doesn't hate Goo because she believes he has faults as an entertainer. She hates him because in carrying on an athletic contest he cheats at every opportunity—just the sort of behavior she'd expect of someone from his background.

Apparently, the wrestling people were moved to make their confession by the prospect of being freed from the control of the state's Athletic Control Board, which now requires licensing for wrestling officials and physical examinations for wrestlers ("Well, everything looks O.K., Mr. Man Mountain, although it wouldn't hurt you to take off a foothill or two"). But they must surely know the risk they're taking with people like my Aunt Flo. I would expect proponents of less government to use this turn of events as confirmation of their argument that the average businessman or -woman would do almost anything to escape the burdens of bureaucratic regulation.

It's possible that they're right. It may be that if pharmaceutical manufacturers were promised freedom from all that paperwork the F.D.A. requires before licensing a new drug, they'd be perfectly willing to carry a notice on aspirin labels saying, "Listen, aspirin is aspirin, so don't take those ads seriously." It may be, for that matter, that if members of Congress were told they would no longer have to register campaign donations with the appropriate agency, they would agree to state, for the public record, their true feelings about, say, abortion. Just after that, the folks in charge of the Easter Bunny might do some straight talking on the *NBC Nightly News.*

Naturally, I'm in favor of freeing small businessmen and -women from government interference. You could say that I'm a small businessman of sorts myself—"of sorts" in this case means exceedingly small—and I would certainly welcome less government interference in my affairs. To be absolutely blunt about it, I'd prefer not to pay my taxes. If what the folks from the World Wrestling Federation are doing in New Jersey can have that as an end result, I suppose I'm all for them.

Also, I'm obviously committed to candor in matters of public policy. When Black History Month comes around each February, for instance, I keep thinking, as I read the speeches and watch the television programs, that what I'd really like to hear discussed is whether it's simply a coincidence that blacks were given the shortest month.

Furthermore, I have always thought that using the word "honorarium" to describe the payment a member of Congress gets for showing up at a lobbyist's function bears about as much connection with reality as those pre-match interviews that feature one professional wrestler or another saying, in effect, "I'll moider da bum." As I understand the changes asked for by the World Wrestling Federation, an invitation to a member of Congress to attend, say, the annual legislative breakfast of the Association of Widget Manufacturers would not mention an honorarium but would say, "Transportation will, of course, be provided, and we can offer a $2,000 bribe."

Still, I can't help thinking about my Aunt Flo. A lot of people in my family believe that if Aunt Flo didn't have The Beast From the Primordial Goo to hate for his unethical and thoroughly despicable behavior, she'd transfer a lot of her animosity to her husband, my Uncle Eddie, who has been known to cut a few corners himself. Uncle Eddie might be putting the last creative touches on the tax deductions he's taking for depreciation on his sump pump when Aunt Flo bears down on him, swinging her purse and yelling "Scoundrel! Goo-monger!" I know that the members of the New Jersey Senate want to do the right thing, but it's not always absolutely clear what the right thing is. It's at times like this that I'm relieved not to have the burden of public office.

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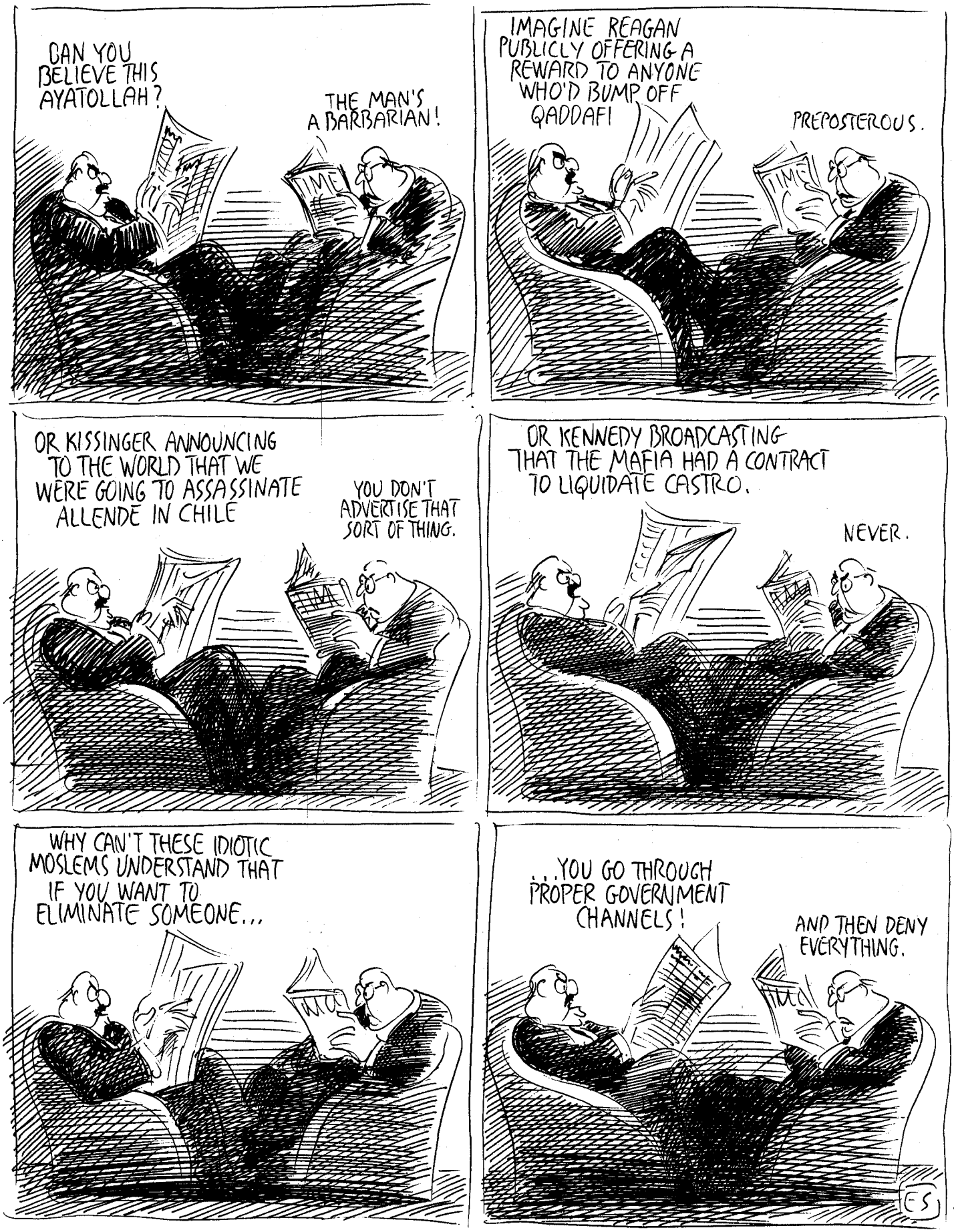
The Rushdie Affair

EDWARD SOREL


CAN YOU BELIEVE THIS AYATOLLAH?
THE MAN'S A BARBARIAN!
TIME
IMAGINE REAGAN PUBLICLY OFFERING A REWARD TO ANYONE WHO'D BUMP OFF QADDAFI
PREPOSTEROUS.
TIME
OR KISSINGER ANNOUNCING TO THE WORLD THAT WE WERE GOING TO ASSASSINATE ALLENDE IN CHILE
YOU DON'T ADVERTISE THAT SORT OF THING.
OR KENNEDY BROADCASTING THAT THE MAFIA HAD A CONTRACT TO LIQUIDATE CASTRO.
NEVER.
WHY CAN'T THESE IDIOTIC MOSLEMS UNDERSTAND THAT IF YOU WANT TO ELIMINATE SOMEONE...
...YOU GO THROUGH PROPER GOVERNMENT CHANNELS!
AND THEN DENY EVERYTHING.
ES

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MINORITY REPORT.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS

In my lost youth I read several accounts of the McCarthy period and, having been lucky enough to miss any direct experience of it, was always left with one unanswered question. How was it that so many respectable people were so frightened of such an obvious (to borrow a description from Reinhold Niebuhr) "political bum"? I now have a clearer idea. In the past weeks I have seen important figures in the liberal culture employing the excuses of tolerance and pluralism in order to euphemize the intolerant and whitewash the enemies of pluralism. The response to the persecution of Salman Rushdie, and the use of gangster "contract" methods against him by the pious, has been a moment of education to fix in the mind.

It began, for me, when ABC's famed *Nightline* invited Rushdie on its February 13 edition to ask him the following question:

> There was a review in today's *Washington Times* by an American which concludes by saying . . . "having discovered no literary reason why Mr. Rushdie chose to portray Mohammed's wives as prostitutes, the Koran as the work of Satan and the founders of the faith as roughnecks and cheats, I had to admit," says this reviewer, "a certain sympathy with the Islamic leaders' complaints." . . . What do you think about that?

Rushdie was not to know that the high-sounding *Washington Times* is a sheet run by the Moonies, who hate him for his public defense of the Nicaraguan revolution and who on principle make common cause with all forms of religious bigotry. (Its star columnist Pat Buchanan lived up to his McCarthyite pedigree in a debate with me on *Crossfire* the night Khomeini made his death threat. Buchanan stuck up staunchly for the sensitivities of fundamentalists, perhaps mistaking them for his former boss's "Iranian moderates.")

One expects this sort of perverted solidarity from those who railed against Scorsese and the Jews who financed *The Last Temptation of Christ*, but mark the *New York Times* review, written by one A.G. Mojtabai:

> To understand the shock of this, Westerners might try a satanic substitution in the text of the Nicene Creed. Few orthodox Christians would find the alteration a laughing matter.

Mojtabai also said that "banning the book only increases its notoriety." I can think of more courageous objections, though I might not expect to hear them from someone who alternates so thoughtlessly between the terms "Westerner" and "orthodox Christian."

The Washington Post treated us to two articles on the necessity of "understanding" the strength of religious feeling. Gregg Easterbrook, a leading neoliberal scribe for *The Atlantic* and *The Washington Monthly*, wrote:

> Two underlying dynamics are at play in the furor over reaction to the novel "The Satanic Verses" by Salman Rushdie. The first is the almost total western ignorance about fundamental tenets of Islamic religion. The second, coming in turn, is the Moslem world's quite justified feeling that westerners make light of their faith without bothering to learn such basic facts as that Islam is theologically a close kin to Judaism and Christianity.

I believe I already knew what the euphemists were trying to tell me, viz. that Moslems and other monotheists are extremely serious about their faiths. I wince whenever I see the common solecism "Mohammedan" employed as a synonym for Islamic. I have written (as has Salman Rushdie on several occasions) about the injustices done to Moslem peoples by Western imperialism. Come to think of it, Rushdie has been rather more forthright on this than either *The Atlantic* or *The Washington Monthly*. But that's not the point here. The issue is the right of Rushdie to make literary use of holy writ and the right of others, including Moslems, to be an audience for such writing.

Bookstore chains cringe; religious leaders honk worriedly about "sensitivity"; Bush and Baker (who used the mullahs as recruiting sergeants for the *contras*) confine themselves to moderate rebuke of Khomeini and mild criticism of the fiction. This is what I mean by the McCarthy analogy. In those days, too, people decided that their own safety came first. In those days distinguished journalists and intellectuals wrote that though McCarthy himself was a bit crude, he did have a point and did have popular sympathy. In those days senior politicians were careful to choose the weakest weasel words of condemnation. In those days St. Patrick's Cathedral could always be counted on for a stupid piece of clerical rationalization. This time New York's John Cardinal O'Connor, while of course remembering to deplore threats, called upon his flock not to read a book that he has not read and probably could not read.

As ever, there is a special unction to the liberal response. How sophisticated of the Canadians, for example, to have suspended the import of Rushdie's book until they could "determine" if it violated a ban on "hate literature." This law, passed to protect the susceptibilities of the Jewish community, has already been used to put "Holocaust revisionists" in jail for their publications. It was the often defamed Noam Chomsky who pointed out to me several years ago that such a law was too convenient not to be extended.

In 1536 William Tyndale was strangled and burned for daring to translate the sacred verses of the Bible into English so that they could be read by the profane masses. (To this day the Koran is authentic only in Arabic.) Every advance in human civilization, from the spread of science and literacy to the abolition of slavery, has had to meet the objection that it violated God-given laws. In other words, nobody should shrink from the accusation of blasphemy. It is a term of moral blackmail, used by the dogmatic to put an end to discussion. Behind the use of bleating words like "offensive," one can sense abject *trahison*: the ecumenicism of the philistines. Living as we do in the era of Khomeini and Kahane and Falwell, it would be suicidal to suppose that any concession made to the superstitious will ever be the last.

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ARTICLES.

CHERCHEZ L'ARGENT

From Balzac to Salvador Dali

DANIEL SINGER

"You are mistaken, dear angel, if you think that King Louis-Philippe rules—a mistake the King himself does not make. He knows, as we all do, that above the Charter stands the holy, the venerated, the solid, the lovable, the beautiful, the noble, the young, the all-powerful five-franc piece," Balzac wrote in *La Cousine Bette*. Since 142 years have elapsed, one has to allow for inflation and for the internationalization of the phenomenon—the idol is now made of paper and colored green—but the idea he tried to convey is more valid than ever. Indeed, it provides the link between a series of happenings, political, financial and cultural, that focused Western Europe's attention in recent weeks on Paris, London and the Catalan town of Figueras.

The Franco-American Can-Can. The French, having just discovered insider trading, seem fascinated by it. At the turn of the year the headlines were almost daily full of the scandal surrounding the takeover of Triangle Industries Inc. by the state-owned conglomerate Pechiney for more than $1.25 billion. Admittedly, the story was quite exciting. In addition to the indictment of five people, including a friend of President François Mitterrand, it had all the ingredients of a classic thriller: a Caribbean connection, a Lebanese trail, the presence of financiers mixed up in Middle East arms and hostage deals, parties on Mediterranean yachts with lovely ladies and all. Only the money at stake was relatively modest. If the quick profits sounded shocking to the French, who were discovering this kind of speculation for the first time, they were penny-ante stuff to readers brought up on Ivan Boesky, Michael Milken and company.

Still, it's a worthy tale. Last summer Samir Traboulsi, a Lebanese financier and lavish entertainer, informed his party companion Alain Boublil, chief of staff of the Minister of Finance, a Socialist, that American National Can (A.N.C.) might be for sale. Pechiney—the world's third largest producer of aluminum, now trying to diversify into packaging—was interested. The trouble was that to get A.N.C. one had to buy Triangle, the parent company, in which Nelson Peltz and Peter May, two American "junk bond" specialists, controlled two-thirds of the voting rights. After much bargaining and one breakdown in the talks, the deal was finally signed on November 20, with Pechiney paying $56 for shares that had been quoted at around $10 in the preceding days.

The snag was that in the three days leading up to the transaction the shares had sold quite briskly, with some 323,000 changing hands. The Securities and Exchange Commission's New York City office started inquiries at once and asked foreign institutions for assistance. The Parisian Commission of Stock Exchange Operations (C.O.B.), a rather toothless French equivalent of the American S.E.C., acted promptly on this occasion. By the end of January it had produced a report favoring criminal proceedings. Otherwise, the report did not reveal much more than the press already had. It had little to say about purchases made through Switzerland or Luxembourg. It did not indicate who stood behind the mysterious International Discount Bank and Trust, registered in the Caribbean island of Anguilla, or about the identity of who had bought more than 70,000 shares in three days through Drexel Burnham Lambert in New York City. But it did provide details of the 56,350 shares bought openly in Paris in the few crucial days, and it confirmed the purchasers' names: Monsieur Max Théret and his associates, with 32,000 shares, made a profit of $1.48 million, minus fees; Monsieur Roger-Patrice Pelat and his family, with 10,000 shares, pocketed $390,000. A handsome pay packet for a week's work, but not enough, in purely financial terms, to justify the hullabaloo. The real reasons for the scandal were political.

Théret, a known Socialist sympathizer, had often come to the party's financial rescue, notably in its publishing ventures. Pelat, who had been with Mitterrand in a P.O.W. camp in Germany, is one of the French President's few intimate friends. Boublil, who resigned from his job despite the fact that his only "guilt" so far is that of unwise association, is himself a Socialist. The conservative parties and the bulk of the press could thus argue that both sides stink alike, that we

DRAWINGS BY D.B. JOHNSON

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

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all are sinners together and that if the left has less on its conscience, it is because it has had fewer opportunities to do ill. Is avarice, then, simply the way of all flesh?

Virtuous Profiteering? The C.O.B. is now very busy, and the next item on its agenda, the abortive bid for one of France's big banks, Société Générale, may help to answer the question. Société Générale was one of the many enterprises denationalized by the right during its years in office, 1986 to 1988. The conservative government of Jacques Chirac not only privatized, it handed property to its friends. The pretext was obvious: In order to prevent a foreign takeover of these firms, one needed a hard core of principal shareholders, legally bound to keep their shares for a couple of years and then to offer first option to their partners. In most cases the chosen few happened to be not only conservatives but also individuals closely linked to Chirac's own party. The bias was so striking that Mitterrand, in his presidential campaign, promised to redress the balance.

But how? In the past the left had a simple answer: renationalize. Now, converted to the virtues of profit and private enterprise, the Socialists had to resort to the market and its vicissitudes. Since Socialist financiers are still in short supply, the government had to rely on not unfriendly businessmen and the backing of the powerful state-owned Caisse des Dépôts, which controls, among other funds, post-office savings. Even so, the raid against Société Générale proved unsuccessful, although some people apparently did make a killing, perhaps with the benefit of inside information. Yet the resulting indignation has little to do with morality. It is designed to remind the converted Socialists to stick to their new gospel.

Since the right has so many skeletons in its closet, the Socialists have adopted a holier-than-thou attitude. The matter, however, is one of policy rather than personal probity. Not so long ago the Socialists would have agreed with Bertolt Brecht's argument that founding a bank is a greater crime than robbing one. Today they wish to have the blessings of the Bourse *and* a reputation for decency. They want the system without its vices—as if these could somehow be exorcised. What shocked the French was not that Théret broke the rules through insider trading; it was his ability, legally or otherwise, to pocket in three days what it would take the poorer half of French wage-earners more than a century to earn.

What is at stake here is not whether the Socialist Minister of Finance wears plebeian socks, or whether François Mitterrand has a distaste for money making—which he does. Mitterrand's innocence and guilt may better be grasped by analogy. When Maurice Ravel was offered the Legion of Honor and turned it down, his fellow composer Eric Satie commented contemptuously: He may reject it, but the whole of his music accepts it. The same is true of the French President and speculation.

All Men Are Equal. Not all the moneybags are companionable chaps with a stiff upper lip. Some actually lose their temper. Taj Jamil Pasha, a Syrian gentleman residing in Houston, Texas, went berserk when his business partner offered him $1 million rather than the $3 million he had been promised as the commission on a deal. He reacted in Chicago fashion, wounding his deceiver with five bullets from his Smith & Wesson. The chase and the shooting took place in 1986, in the corridors of the Plaza-Athénée, one of Paris's plusher hotels. Perhaps impressed by the scene of the crime and the amount involved, the French judiciary proved lenient. After six months in preventive detention, Jamil Pasha was released on parole and allowed to return to Texas. He was back in Paris this January 24, explaining to the judge that "each man has his breaking point." The bench was indulgent, and sentenced him to six months in prison (which he had already served) plus three and a half years, suspended. Jamil Pasha walked out of the courtroom free to enjoy Paris or go back to Texas. The very same day, in the same court, a North African of more humble extraction was not quite so lucky. Accused of attempting armed robbery, he had spent nine months in preventive detention. He too asked to be released on parole. In vain. *Le Monde*'s witty commentator drew his readers' attention to the contrast, concluding with the moral from one of La Fontaine's fables: "Depending on whether you be powerful or miserable . . . the court will make you black or white." Two centuries after the storming of the Bastille, and despite persistent assurances that the Revolution has done its job, it cannot be said that privilege has vanished altogether.

Shark Swallows Shark. While I was in England in January, another prospective takeover, this one incomparably bigger than Pechiney's bid for Triangle, was capturing the imagination of the editors, if not necessarily that of the public. Sponsored by Barclays Bank and by Lazard Frères, and involving three British firms, Thomson of France and General Electric (and possibly A.T.&T.) from America, the bid was to start at somewhere around $12 billion. The target was the General Electric Company of Britain, the country's biggest defense electronics firm, a giant sleeping on its cash. But the operation didn't come off. At the last moment, G.E.C.'s chair, Lord Weinstock, made a deal for joint ventures in Europe with its American counterpart, thus temporarily dividing the potential aggressors. This thrust and parry, however, was neither the end of the story nor in fact its beginning. The projected takeover was itself a counteroffer, since G.E.C. and the West German company Siemens had earlier made a bid to buy Plessey, another British electronics firm. (That bid is now being examined by the British Monopolies and Mergers Commission.)

Don't worry if all this sounds complicated. The examples are cited simply to convey the progress that has been made since Balzac's day, to show that the sharks, having swallowed up the small- and medium-sized fish, are now taking on each other—and doing so in international waters. Or, to drop the metaphor, economic concentration, which has gone quite far in the West as a whole, is now reaching a new dimension in Europe. All the firms mentioned above, as well as Philips in Holland and G.C.E. in France, to go no further than electronics companies, are themselves the products of previous takeovers and mergers. More than ever, European governments have been prompting their national "champions" to grow strong enough for international competition, and Pechi-

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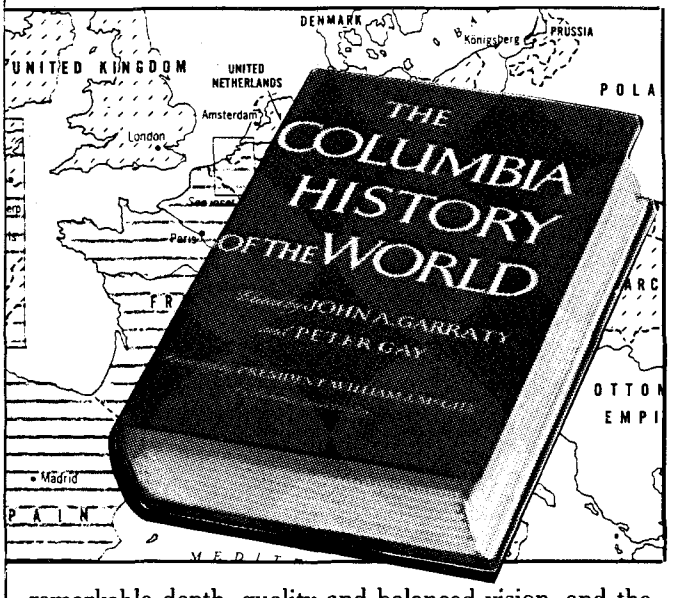

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ney's purchase fits this pattern. But "national-sized" is no longer large enough. With a unified European market on the horizon, companies are being urged to unite in order to face competition from outside the EC. At the same time, there is a temptation for U.S. and Japanese giants to climb over the wall and take over European firms.

The Battle of Britain gives no indication of which trend will prevail. The way in which G.E.C. and Siemens ganged up together suggested at first a European solution, but when the chips were down the Americans were quickly called to the rescue. All that can be said with certainty is that jingoism is not one of money's many vices—capital knows no frontiers. Indeed, some forecasters think it may soon cross the Elbe in massive formation. Balzac, for all his grasp of the power of money, could not quite imagine the extension of its reign.

Ars Brevis, Vita Longa. So far in this story, money has had little to do with art. Back in Paris, however, the two had a brief encounter. As Daniel Barenboim was being dismissed as the artistic director of the Bastille Opera, which is to be inaugurated this year, his salary was revealed—more than $1 million. A year? No, more accurately for four months a year, because if the conductor were to work longer than that in France he would lose his position as a privileged nonresident taxpayer.

In a society in which tycoons have incomes that run into eight figures, the reader may object, why shouldn't artists be allowed to climb into seven? In any case, the salary was secondary in this conflict. The confrontation was really over the nature of the proposed opera: Should it be run as a series of festivals for the elite, as the Barenboim project implied, or should it play all the time, combine new artists and experimental works with *Carmen* and *Aida*, and aim at a vast, popular audience? When Pierre Boulez, a backer of Barenboim, tried to argue that these two approaches were not in conflict, his critics replied that a small number of performances with superstars implied higher costs, more expensive seats and therefore a different audience.

Mitterrand himself settled the matter in the critics' favor. When he first launched the Bastille project, he probably hoped to do for the opera what the National Popular Theater (T.N.P.) under Jean Vilar tried to achieve after the war, namely, to break barriers and reach an entirely new public with both classic and modern plays. The T.N.P. tried to do so, in part, by keeping prices down and distributing tickets through "enterprise committees" in factories and big offices. The experiment was not a complete success; you don't change your audience fundamentally without changing society. But it was an ambitious attempt. It is doubtful whether the Bastille Opera will be given a similar chance. The general climate has changed, and art must now fit into an environment incomparably more commercial.

Which brings us to the Catalan town of Figueras and the long-anticipated death of Salvador Dali. I will leave it to Arthur C. Danto and his colleagues to debate the place that should be attributed in the history of modern painting to Dali in his Surrealist period—say, up to the late 1930s. Thereafter, Dali's career offers a portrait of the artist as a commercial man. Probably nobody in the last half-century has better symbolized the marriage of art with showmanship and money than this friend of Franco. André Breton, the pope of Surrealism, had an anagram for the renegade—Avida Dollars. For Dali's wife, Gala, Breton had only a nickname: Tiroir-caisse. A cash register, the soul of our society? □

SETTING PRIORITIES

Fighting Poverty After Reagan

JOAN WALSH

For anyone concerned with poverty in the United States, the best thing about the Reagan era is that it is over. Nevertheless, the eight-year ordeal taught antipoverty groups more than a few lessons about advocacy, leaving them stronger, better organized and with a well-defined agenda that is already getting attention from the Bush Administration.

Not that this toughened stance should be confused with any improvement in the lives of the disadvantaged. More than 32.5 million people were poor in 1987, up 8 million from 1978. The number of families with children living in poverty rose 35 percent in those years, and the poverty rate of black children climbed to 45 percent. Meanwhile, spending on many poverty programs plummeted. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, appropriations for low-income nonentitlement programs have been cut by 54 percent since fiscal 1981. Thus, the poor bore far more of the deficit-reduction burden than any other group.

The early Reagan era saw the antipoverty community badly outmaneuvered by data-wielding budget director David Stockman and the conservative agenda hustlers from the Heritage Foundation. The enormous influence of the analysis that Charles Murray popularized in *Losing Ground*—that welfare programs worsened poverty by encouraging unemployment and dependence—set back antipoverty forces severely. But the advocates recovered and made some savvy public relations decisions, focusing on the needs of disadvantaged children and antipoverty programs that have been demonstrated to work. Groups like the Children's Defense Fund and the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities led the counterattack in Washington, while providers of local services tried to make scarce resources go farther.

Antipoverty advocates are now organizing around a fairly specific agenda of cost-effective programs. "When I went to work for the Federal government in the 1970s," recalls

Joan Walsh, an associate editor of Pacific News Service whose work has appeared in many publications, has served as a consultant on family policy and children's issues to the California State Legislature and the Oakland-based Urban Strategies Council.

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Robert Greenstein, director of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, "I sat down with a group of advocates and said, 'Listen, we can't fund every food assistance program. What should our priorities be?' And people weren't comfortable with that—they didn't want to make those choices. Today, every group has their priorities down."

For most groups those priorities center on thwarting the problems that affect poor kids disproportionately and increase their chances of becoming impoverished adults. These efforts include preventing pregnancy among teenagers; providing perinatal care for pregnant women to reduce the incidence of low-birth-weight babies and infant mortality; setting up health, nutrition and parent-support programs for infants and their families; widening early education for toddlers and preschoolers; and implementing strategies to lower the school dropout rate. Growing bipartisan support for expanding Head Start and other preschool programs, the Women, Infants and Children's nutrition supplement, perinatal care for low-income mothers, urban school reform, job training and even some type of child care subsidy shows the success of the preventive approach.

At the local level, providers have gotten smarter about delivering social services. When Lisbeth Schorr analyzed successful social strategies while writing *Within Our Reach: Breaking the Cycle of Disadvantage*, she saw that exemplary programs were distinguished by regularly "crossing professional and bureaucratic boundaries." But since success requires defying the established order, she also found that genuinely successful programs are relatively rare. Now many teen-age-parent, perinatal care and child development programs are starting to emphasize flexible, comprehensive services and collaboration among a range of providers. The Parent-Infant Neighborhood Center in San Francisco is a small project furnishing child care and preventive mental health services to the families of abused, neglected and developmentally delayed infants in the city's Western Addition. The center is coordinating an effort by local hospitals, mental health clinics, child development centers and drug awareness programs to design a comprehensive strategy to serve the neighborhood. "There is very little money and a lot of duplication of services," says director Melvin Miles. "So collaboration is the way to go."

Nationally, from the Beethoven Project in Chicago to Avance in San Antonio and Houston to a proposed Birth-to-School Project in Oakland, California, the nation's cutting-edge antipoverty projects are bringing together a range of community agencies to provide a variety of services for low-income families. Even large institutions are learning the benefits of coordination and collaboration: New York City's nationally lauded Giant Step program, for instance, brought together the city's schools, Head Start and publicly funded child care programs to provide preschool education for all the city's 4-year-olds.

Antipoverty advocates have yet to counter successfully the ideological assault on most programs for the disadvantaged. But the right's attack on the welfare state has had the positive effect of forcing its supporters to make their own critique. Last year's welfare reform battle in Congress resulted in a nasty piece of legislation [see Mimi Abramovitz, "Why Welfare Reform Is a Sham," *The Nation*, September 26] that will condition welfare benefits on clients' seeking work or training; but it also forced advocates to spell out what *they* thought would move welfare clients to independence, rather than simply lobbying for expanded benefits.

That process brought the working poor back into the welfare-obsessed poverty debate (since the new program will likely take the welfare poor and make them working poor). In Congress, growing support for an increase in the minimum wage, expansion of government health insurance, a more generous earned income tax credit (popular with Republicans) and other help for low-income workers is partly the result of the welfare reform debate.

Maybe the best legacy of the Reagan years is the growing strength of antipoverty advocacy and organizing in the black community. The black middle class is beginning to join the battle. Black sororities and fraternities, professional organizations and service groups are sponsoring literacy, tutoring and "mentorship" programs.

"Our work is getting an enormous response in the black middle-class community," says Angela Blackwell, executive director of the Oakland-based Urban Strategies Council, a research and advocacy group on persistent poverty. "People want to go beyond funding scholarships and get involved with projects that bring them into caring contact with poor families. The talk of a black 'underclass' saddens them, and frankly it angers them, because the country seems ready to write off part of the black community." In the black, low-income community of East Palo Alto, California, Club 99 links the area's black professionals to kids needing an adult friend and role model. Around the San Francisco Bay area, the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity sponsors tutoring and men-

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torship programs at high schools with students primarily from low-income families, alongside its traditional fund-raising and scholarship programs. Such endeavors are becoming common in U.S. cities today.

Thanks to all these efforts, much of the new antipoverty agenda is selling—in city halls, state capitals and in Washington. The early signs from Bush's budget address indicate that programs for impoverished children will clearly be more popular than they were in the Reagan White House. The President's friends in corporate America, concerned about their future work force, are rightly alarmed that one-quarter of the nation's preschoolers are growing up in poverty. You can see it in *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *Business Week*, where editorials and feature articles champion the prevention agenda.

If the achievement of the 1980s antipoverty advocacy was building a consensus behind an agenda for poor children, the task of the 1990s will be to do the same for low-income adults. The Reagan ideologues' most damaging victory—with help from liberals—was in successfully defining the poor as an "underclass" of criminals and welfare dependents. Blaming the poor for their poverty is nothing new, but the Reagan years saw the disadvantaged stigmatized with innovative cruelty. And sadly, the current focus on children is not likely to change that framework. "Children are seen as the 'deserving poor,' so their programs get support. We've yet to challenge the dominant belief that adult poverty is due to people's behavior or moral fabric," says University of Chicago urban poverty expert William Julius Wilson.

Programs for black men are particularly lacking. Since our would-be Education President is also the man who turned murderer Willie Horton into a Rorschach test for racism and fear, he is not expected to clear new paths of opportunity for unemployed black men. Yet the inability to face the problems of low-income men may undermine the rest of the antipoverty agenda. Job training administrators in welfare-to-work projects commonly complain that their female clients are held back by the resentment of their unemployed boyfriends and husbands. Teen-age-parent programs report the same thing. Trouble for poor men begins early—some model preschool programs have even found that girls who participate show great gains in school achievement and self-esteem but boys get only minimal benefit, partly because they lack solid male role models either at home or in the programs.

Advocates seeking program funds for men and boys are reduced to begging. In San Francisco, a landmark program for teen-age fathers tried to get money through California's new welfare reform initiative, but the request was denied. For years San Antonio's Avance failed to get funding to develop a "fatherhood project" in its successful family support program; it recently received a small demonstration grant to serve thirty men. In Boston, one savvy administrator of a successful welfare-to-work training project says she's faced the same roadblock and has had "absolutely no luck getting money for programs for black and Hispanic men."

Unfortunately, advocacy for poor men is stymied by a lack of consensus on what to request. Black men have been disproportionately hurt by the decline of the nation's urban manufacturing base, and those jobs aren't coming back. Many are victims of a mismatch between their skills and the urban service economy, which is mainly generating jobs that require greater education. Focusing on children, many critics argue, is a way to insure that this generation grows up to have the skills their parents don't, skills that can command a living wage.

Clearly, children's programs alone will not solve the problems of poverty. Even the High/Scope Perry Preschool project in Ypsilanti, Michigan, the 1960s success story that inspired today's preschool mania, produced one disturbing outcome: While Perry graduates were less likely to drop out of school, rely on welfare or commit a crime as adults, they were only slightly better off financially than kids who didn't go through the program. Most grew up to be self-supporting, law-abiding low-income people.

A genuine antipoverty agenda for adults and children has to start with concern over the growth of low-wage employment in the 1980s. Rising poverty rates in a time of declining unemployment have shown that work is not always a route out. Advocates should adapt their emphasis on successful antipoverty programs for children and publicize the fact that jobs don't always work to eradicate poverty. Groups like the Children's Defense Fund, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities and the Economic Policy Institute have begun to move in this direction, issuing recent reports on the

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economic plight of young adults and low-wage workers. But even the strengthened community of advocates lacks the political muscle to foster positive legislation to control capital flight, increase welfare benefits and provide jobs. Such measures were politically unpopular even before Reagan's ideological assault. But only such reforms—together with the children's agenda—offer any chance of ending poverty. □

ARGENTINA'S TURMOIL

Dirty Secrets of The 'Dirty War'

MARTIN EDWIN ANDERSEN

Events in Argentina are rarely what they seem on the surface. A fresh reminder of this came in late January, when reports began to filter out about yet another commando assault on a military base. Three times in the space of twenty-one months, the threat to Argentine democracy had come from ultrarightist military officers demanding vindication for their vicious unconventional "war" against leftist guerrillas and others in the 1970s, in which as many as 20,000 people were abducted, tortured and killed in scores of secret death camps.

To universal surprise, however, those involved in the January bloodbath, in which thirty-nine people died, were leftists, and a their identities and foreign connections became known, Argentina's unrepentant right wing had a field day. The attackers seemed to confirm the armed forces' every stereotype of the left. "No one," wrote the playwright Osvaldo Soriano in the center-left daily *Página 12*, "had so far done so much in favor of the 'vindication' demanded by the armed forces."

Among those who died in the attack on the La Tablada barracks, just outside Buenos Aires, was Jorge Baños, a well-known former human-rights lawyer. Baños's All For the Fatherland Movement, which received financial support from Cuba, sustained most of the casualties in the attack. Several of the irregular combatants were former members of the People's Revolutionary Army (E.R.P.), one of the two most important guerrilla groups in Argentina in the 1970s.

To make matters worse, the leader of the assault on La Tablada was one of Argentina's most wanted fugitives, former E.R.P. commander Enrique Haroldo Gorriarán Merlo. It was not his first confrontation with the Argentine Army. Two years before the 1976 military coup, he led a failed attack on an army base in Azul. At about the same time, he also played a central role in the kidnapping of oil executive Victor Samuelson, a U.S. citizen, which netted the E.R.P. $12 million in ransom. But Gorriarán is best remem-

Martin Edwin Andersen worked in Buenos Aires from 1982 to 1987 as a special correspondent for Newsweek *and* The Washington Post. *He writes regularly on foreign affairs.*

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bered for masterminding the 1980 assassination in Paraguay of deposed Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza. He also helped set up the Sandinistas' security apparatus in the early days of the Nicaraguan revolution.

Yet Gorriarán's combat record did not guarantee him laurels within the guerrillas' ranks. In 1974 the E.R.P.'s top leader, Mario Roberto Santucho, had him demoted from the organization's all-important political bureau for brutally torturing an E.R.P. member whom Gorriarán wrongly believed to be an army infiltrator. He did not regain top rank within the E.R.P. until Santucho was killed in July 1976. With Santucho's death, however, the E.R.P. was largely destroyed, so Gorriarán remained a rather marginal figure on the outer fringe of Argentina's revolutionary left.

Despite his political isolation, the raid that Gorriarán led in January is already being used by the military to justify, retroactively, its conduct in the "dirty war." More than five years into the civilian government of President Raúl Alfonsín, the Argentine military continues to maintain that the elaborate cell structure of the guerrillas in the 1970s obliged it to resort to "unconventional" means of repression. But a growing body of evidence suggests that much of the so-called war was merely a violent show in which the military used smoke and mirrors to exaggerate the threat from the left and frighten and intimidate the Argentine people.

For example, military propagandists continue to claim that the army defeated up to 1,000 E.R.P. irregulars attempting to set up a "Red Republic" in the remote northwestern province of Tucumán in 1975 and early 1976. Yet army intelligence documents and interviews with former guerrillas show that the E.R.P. could rarely field more than sixty or seventy poorly equipped combatants at any one time; less than 230 guerrillas took part in the entire eighteen-month-long military action, many of them rotated in and out of duty from urban centers. According to Argentine intelligence and police sources, about one-fourth of the security forces' reported victims of "leftist subversion" in Tucumán in fact died in accidents or other unrelated incidents.

One man who can reveal many of the dirtiest secrets of the dirty war is today serving a thirty-year prison sentence in Buenos Aires, after he was captured and extradited from Brazil in 1984. He is Mario Firmenich, leader of the Montoneros, a group some historians claim was Latin America's largest urban guerrilla movement of the 1970s. But Firmenich is not what he appears to be. According to a former U.S. intelligence officer who was assigned to the U.S. Embassy in Buenos Aires for most of the 1970s and charged by then-Ambassador Robert Hill with keeping track of the leftist guerrillas, Firmenich was a double agent working for the Argentine military.

Doubts about Firmenich have been fitfully raised before, mostly by political opponents of the Montoneros and often based on the fact that he began his political career in the 1960s as a neofascist. Two years ago further questions were raised when it was shown that the site of a clandestine 1975 press conference, at which Firmenich had released a captured Argentine industrialist for a whopping $60 million ransom, was in fact a state intelligence safe house in which two agents were present.

Adding to the doubts about Firmenich has been the fact that he was one of the few senior guerrilla leaders to survive the dirty war and that his parents, unlike the relatives of thousands of *desaparecidos*, the "disappeared," did not receive so much as a single death threat during the years of military terror. Firmenich also continued to make outlandish claims of imminent military victory long after other Montonero leaders were privately admitting a stunning rout. Rather than trying to persuade the junta to end the bloodbath by acknowledging military defeat, Firmenich gave the military the pretext it needed for continued repression. In 1979 he even sent scores of exiled Montoneros back into Argentina for a "final offensive," which resulted in their massacre.

In fact, Firmenich's cooperation with the army began as early as mid-1973, as he watched his cohorts in the nationalist guerrilla movement move steadily to the left. According to the U.S. diplomat, who was extremely close to top members of the Argentine security establishment, Firmenich was "handled" by a colonel in the notorious 601 Intelligence Battalion who was later promoted to general and became the head of army intelligence. Asked to comment on this, a second U.S. official, who served as the C.I.A. station chief in Buenos Aires from 1972 to 1974, said, "It's certainly plausible. . . . [Firmenich] did seem to have a rather open relationship with the military establishment." The former station chief also pointed out that in contrast with the E.R.P., which was "really sophisticated," the Montoneros were "not a disciplined army—which made them more easy to penetrate."

One of several guerrillas vying for leadership of the Montoneros, Firmenich bolstered his reputation when he spread the word that he had been behind the assassination of the head of the powerful Peronist labor confederation in 1973, as well as the killing of a former interior minister in 1974. The claims were false. According to the U.S. diplomat, those murders were actually the work of Peronist Social Welfare Minister José López Rega. Known as El Brujo—the Sorcerer—López Rega was the man responsible for setting up the notorious Argentine Anti-Communist Alliance, or "Triple-A," death squads. Nevertheless, the two killings were consistent with a pattern of leftist terrorism that seemed to make a military crackdown imperative. By 1976 the military had overthrown the government of Juan Perón's widow, Isabel, and the paramilitary Triple-A was replaced by state terrorism.

Terror by the left was "serious and deadly," the U.S. diplomat recalled, "but its scope was exaggerated. At no time did [it] ever represent a threat to the stability" of the constitutional regime. (Even according to the military's own claims, which are surely inflated, a total of some 650 people were killed by the left between 1969 and 1979.) The real reason for the coup, the diplomat said, was the disastrous state of the Argentine economy and the staggering corruption of Isabel Perón's government. "A considerable number of the murders, kidnappings and extortions attributed to the

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guerrillas were caused by other elements," he went on, "and many of their actions were conveniently blamed on leftist terrorists," who offered the armed forces "a convenient vehicle to seek retaliation against real or imagined wrongs."

The former C.I.A. station chief believes that it was the desire for vengeance—not the military capability of the guerrillas—that led the armed forces to launch the dirty war. Again, the E.R.P. was seen as a greater threat than the less-well-organized Montoneros. "The military was embarrassed," he said, "because the E.R.P. made them look like jerks, incompetents." In the end, the biggest prize that the army netted through the efforts of its double agent, Firmenich, was the E.R.P.'s top commander, Mario Roberto Santucho. According to the U.S. diplomat, Santucho's death in a shootout with an army patrol in 1976 came after Firmenich had betrayed the E.R.P. leader's whereabouts. When Santucho's body was laid out on display at the Campo de Mayo military base, a number of high-ranking Argentine officers took the opportunity to urinate on the corpse.

Since the appearance of Jacobo Timerman's *Prisoner Without a Name, Cell Without a Number*, there has been a virtual deluge of literature, both fiction and nonfiction, about the atrocities committed during the Argentine military's years in power. There remains, however, a striking gap in all these works, one that provides the military forces with the opportunity for revisionism about their past role—and, for that matter, their future one. Until the question of whether what took place in the 1970s was really a war is fully addressed, the debate will remain narrowly framed about the methods, brutal and repugnant as they may be, that the military used to win.

The double life of Mario Firmenich, like the exaggeration of the threat posed by the guerrillas in Tucumán, helps to illustrate that the dirty war, while unquestionably dirty, was not much of a war. So does the evidence from the scores of bodies of *desaparecidos* that have been exhumed, nearly all of them shot at very close range in the head or back of the neck.

Whether the disastrous assault on La Tablada turns out to have been a reckless act by extremists or whether the shadowy hand of military intelligence will again become apparent, the only immediate winners are the armed forces. Already, Argentina's right wing has proposed that the country's new national security law be amended to allow the military to act as guarantor of internal security, a role currently monopolized by the police.

In recent months both the military and Firmenich's supporters have been clamoring for an amnesty, a move they say will encourage a spirit of "national reconciliation." The candidates of both major parties in this May's presidential elections, the Peronists and the Radicals, have gone on record as opposing an amnesty. But if military putsches and insurgent harassment begin to spiral, it is an open question how long the civilians will be able to stick to their promises. There is, of course, a certain neatness to the concept of amnesty. Military wrongdoing would be washed away by the release of a major terrorist leader of the left. Yet Firmenich's real background makes such a proposal a mockery of the Alfonsín government's valiant efforts to restore the rule of law. All those who would benefit from an amnesty are of the military—whether they wear uniforms or not.

The failure to reveal the true history of the military period will condemn Argentina to repeat it. That history needs to be told again and again, so that 30 million people are not manipulated a second time into believing that the military must be called in once more to crush a subversive threat that the generals themselves had a hand in creating. □

Newhouse

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

alert to the tax problems of certain headline-worthy politicians. Indeed, the Newhouse papers themselves have displayed admirable vigilance in pursuit of such corner cutters—like Lee Alexander, the former Mayor of Syracuse, New York. The chain's *Post-Standard* and *Herald-Journal*, good watchdogs that they are, barked noisily for months before Alexander ultimately was found guilty on tax evasion and other charges last year. In fact, no sooner was the Federal indictment handed down in 1987 than the *Herald-Journal* editorialized that "the case looks solid," adding that if Alexander was found guilty "we will have precious little sympathy" for him.

The government's case against the Newhouse family may be solid, too, but I resist any rush to judgment, for such haste is not the American Way. Suffice it to say that the trial deserves a bit more attention than it has got, even though it is complex and the arithmetic involved requires a certain concentration. I urge readers to press on, if only to put their own tax problems into perspective as April 15 looms. After all, if two brothers who control a fortune estimated at $5.2 billion may lose a fifth of it to the government, how bad off can the rest of us be?

Our story begins in 1979, when Samuel Irving Newhouse died. He was 84 years old and had pursued a sufficiently full life to leave behind the largest privately held media empire in the United States. Besides the newspapers, which also included the Newark *Star-Ledger*, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* and the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*, he owned some cable television operations and Condé Nast magazines, *Mademoiselle* and *Vogue* among them. The magazines he bought in 1959 as—he liked to say—a surprise present for his wife, Mitzi, on their thirty-fifth wedding anniversary.

Six months after "S.I." died, his two sons, the aforementioned Samuel Jr. (Si) and Donald, together with the family's fiduciaries, valued his gross adjusted estate at nearly $181.9 million and filed a return listing the net tax due as just shy of $48.7 million. After some scrutiny, the I.R.S. in 1983 advised the brothers that the estate was worth an estimated $1.2 billion, and thus the tax as computed was deficient by more than $609 million. Moreover, the government tacked on a 50 percent penalty ($304 million and change) for civil fraud.

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This is big money even for rich folks, and the brothers Newhouse took considerable offense, calling the fraud charge "preposterous" and accusing the I.R.S. of purposely trying to embarrass them because of their high profile as media magpies. "Pay up," responded the revenooers, as they are wont to do. From 1983 on, the adversaries did get together occasionally to talk of a settlement, and some issues were worked out. The government even dropped the $304 million fraud penalty eventually. But the I.R.S. also took yet another look at the estate and decided the original tax deficiency bill should be doubled—to $1.2 billion. Both parties squared off before Judge B. John Williams Jr. early this January.

At the heart of their quarrel is a dispute over the worth of the Newhouse holdings when the patriarch died. His sons maintain that the fair market value of the family holdings was $246 million. The I.R.S. initially argued that the properties were worth at least five times that, and after recent assessments by several experts now insists they were in fact worth nine times the Newhouse figure, or about $2.2 billion. The estate owes roughly half this amount in taxes, the government claims, in part because S.I. Newhouse was completely in control of Advance Publications Inc., the family company, when he died, as he had been since he founded it in 1924.

Certainly Newhouse had a passion for control. He was both president and treasurer of Advance Publications at his death and, more important, he owned all the common stock in the company: 1,000 shares, of which only ten carried voting rights. The rest of the family had to make do with 3,500 preferred shares: 1,000 for Mitzi, 750 each for Si and Donald and 500 each for S.I.'s brothers, Theodore and Norman. These certificates paid those nominal dividends with happy regularity but gave their holders no say whatsoever in running the company.

In 1977, two and a half years before S.I. died, Chemical Bank, which had served the family since 1932, reviewed his estate plan. In an internal memorandum, William Worthington Jr., then a financial officer at the bank, warned that the Treasury was likely to put a higher value on the 1,000 shares of common stock than on the 3,500 preferred. The memorandum states that the common stock gave the founder the clout to liquidate, merge or take the company public without the consent of the preferred shareholders—his wife, sons and brothers. Consequently, the memo urged, a 1974 shareholder agreement should be modified to "lend credence" to the position that all the stock was equal. No such revision took place before Newhouse died, but Chemical nonetheless treated all the shares equally in coming up with the $181.9 million figure for his gross adjusted estate. The I.R.S. found this maneuver slippery. In his opening statement in court, the government's lead counsel, Robert Shilliday Jr., likened Chemical's ploy to "a magician's card trick, a sleight of hand."

Nonsense, retorted the Newhouse legal team, which then launched its case by putting Donald and Si on the stand. Both were immediately at great pains to explain that Pop didn't really run the company, they all did: the boys, their uncles Norman and Ted, *and* Pop. They all worked like field hands, often getting to the office before 5 A.M.—a "terrible habit," testified Donald. Father Newhouse never issued *diktats* and votes were never required to resolve disagreements, both sons said repeatedly. If, say, "the group of five" wanted to pick up the Booth Newspapers for $304 million, as they did in 1976, all of them poked around, checked out the numbers and arrived at a decision by consensus. "It's a subtle process that comes out of the Newhouse corporate [and] family culture and it has . . . given us a wonderful result," Si told the court with some understatement. Only once did this picture of togetherness blur a bit, after government counsel Albert Sandlin asked Donald, on cross-examination, if he regarded his father as "a pretty firm manager."

NEWHOUSE: Oh, very.
SANDLIN: What's that?
NEWHOUSE: I said, "Oh, very."
SANDLIN: [D]id he ever lose his temper?
NEWHOUSE: Definitely.

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SANDLIN: If he ever told you to do something, would you do it?

NEWHOUSE: As a father, yes.

This colloquy hints at the real Sam Newhouse, who was in fact a tough and demanding father, a meticulous overseer who ran Advance with a single-mindedness aimed at making money and avoiding taxes. "As long as he remained healthy and able to supervise the affairs of his empire, he would cling to it tenaciously," wrote Richard Meeker in his 1983 biography, *Newspaperman: S.I. Newhouse and the Business of News.* At the end of his life, S.I. prepared "A Memo for the Children," the entire thrust of which, Meeker says, is "How I Did It."

The effort to persuade Judge Williams that, on the contrary, Advance was run cheerfully by the Five Musketeers was meant to show that the four male stockholders brandished their preferred swords of acquisition just as ferociously as the old man wielded his common. Thus, argued the petitioners, all the stock really *was* equal, especially since both classes drew the same dividends year after year. Not that Donald and Si ever pondered these payouts; both insisted that they were far too busy working to think about money. Under cross-examination, Donald testified that Uncle Ted had warned early on "that we not fall into the Hearstian trap of developing big egos and rich habits."

Besides insisting on the parity of the preferred and common stock, the Newhouse lawyers accused the government of measuring the worth of the estate based on the "bust-up" value of Advance Publications: what the company would bring if liquidated. Newhouse lead counsel Albert Turkus argued in his opening statement that his clients never contemplated selling the golden goose that S.I. began fattening when he bought *The Staten Island Advance* in 1922 and which the family has stuffed ever since. Moreover, said Turkus, any valuation of the company should not be based on its estimated worth. "The test is the price," he said. "What is the price at which this stock would change hands between a willing buyer and a willing seller, neither under compulsion, both knowing all the relevant facts."

The battle joined, some thirty expert witnesses took to the stand for the two sides. The government put on professors from no fewer than five major law schools, as well as magazine authority James Kobak and newspaper consultant John Morton, who both testified that the fair market value of the Newhouse agglomeration in 1980 was $2.1 billion. The petitioners countered with a pin-striped parade from such blue chip firms as Sullivan and Cromwell (law), Goldman Sachs and Company (investment banking) and Coopers and Lybrand (accounting). Martin Lipton, the mergers and acquisitions whiz from Wachtell, Lipton, Rosen and Katz in New York City, testified that various legal and business constraints made selling Advance's common stock at a premium quite problematic.

Most of these experts testified for steep fees, but Rupert Murdoch dropped by gratis on behalf of the Newhouse brothers. "It is very nice of you to come," said Si, giving his fellow baron a hearty handshake. Looking around at all the empty pews and sounding somewhat disappointed, Murdoch said, "I was expecting more of a turnout." Murdoch was sworn in and asked by Turkus if he was presently employed. He allowed that he was—as chief executive officer of the News Corporation, which has worldwide sales of $5 billion a year. Did he know Donald and Si? Yes, as "social acquaintances," and also as "pretty vigorous competitors" in the magazine business.

Under Turkus's careful guidance, Murdoch played down the value of Advance Publications, testifying that he found the company an uninviting takeover target because of antitrust laws and Federal Communications Commission rules against cross-ownership of newspapers and television stations in the same market. He also said he would not buy just the common shares of Advance, that without the preferred shares a purchase would be "a very bad business proposition for anybody." After the appearance, Rupert and Si walked out of the courtroom smiling, arm in arm. "See you in New York," Murdoch said to Si's son Wynn, who was visiting the lists with his dad. With that, the no-fee expert walked out of U.S. Tax Court and into a limousine parked illegally at the curb.

Whatever the merits of the I.R.S. case, the salaried government lawyers seemed no match for the Newhouse forces from the Washington firm of Dow, Lohnes and Albertson. Turkus, who was earning at least $225 an hour, was consistently well prepared and sharp; his objections (occasionally quite sarcastic) were usually sustained by Judge Williams, whether because the 1985 Reagan appointee sympathized with the Newhouse predicament was unclear. What was plain was Williams's dismay whenever the government fumbled, which was often. At one point, when Sandlin

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lost his way and looked over to his leader, Shilliday, for help, Williams exploded, telling the stammering Sandlin to look at him when being addressed. The judge then ordered Shilliday to stand and advised him that he also needed "a refresher course" in courtroom behavior. Given that $1 billion or so was at stake in the trial, the arguments for Federal pay raises as a way of attracting more talented public servants seemed at least momentarily persuasive.

I have, of necessity, oversimplified much of *Estate of Samuel I. Newhouse . . . v. Commissioner of Internal Revenue.* As expert followed expert into the witness box over the six weeks of the trial, the argot of high finance caromed around the courtroom as if it were an oversized racquetball court. Only a publication with more space available than this one could painstakingly unravel all the complexities of exchange ratios, participation earnings, residuary voting power and properly weighted historical dividend streams. The case cries out for extended treatment—an "Annals of Taxation" piece in *The New Yorker*, for example.

Better yet, the altercation should be carefully examined in a book—from Random House, say, or Alfred A. Knopf or Pantheon, with the last placing the dispute in the left context it is so good at capturing. These publishers could sell first serial rights to *Parade* magazine, whose 64 million Sunday readers would surely be awed by the numbers. *Vanity Fair* might well be interested in publishing an excerpt, too, gushing over how Si lunches frequently at the Four Seasons and exploring his recent acquisition of a Jasper Johns canvas for $17 million. Of course, the brothers Newhouse own *The New Yorker*, Random House, Knopf, Pantheon, *Parade* and *Vanity Fair*, but I leave that awkwardness for seminars at the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications at Syracuse University.

True, there remain several newspapers, magazines and publishing houses that the Newhouses don't own. But as the perceptive Rupert Murdoch noted, Judge Williams's courtroom was not abustle with the curious even when so notable a kingpin as himself was giving witness. This is not because the media always avert their gaze when the government sets out after men in well-tailored suits and rep ties who have accumulated large amounts of cash. Even television news has managed to keep track of such big-time hustlers as Ivan Boesky and Michael Milken, to name just two Wall Street headliners of recent times. But alleged tax evasion in the ten figures? By members in good standing of the media conglomerate club whom fellow potentates might encounter any noon at the Four Seasons or later in black tie at Sotheby's? Better to distract the vulgar plebes with circuses like the Steinberg and Myerson trials.

But perhaps I am too cynical. If so, it's by no means too late to prove it. The Newhouse trial ended February 17, but Judge Williams will not hand down his decision for several months. Meanwhile, the transcript and is now available for all to read, including enterprising journalists with a bent for math. The U.S. Tax Court is at 400 Second Street N.W. in Washington. The telephone number of the public file office there is (202) 376-2727. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

'Who Has the Best Tunes?'

JOHN LEONARD

THE SATANIC VERSES. *By Salman Rushdie. Viking. 547 pp. $19.95.*

Headlines kept getting in the way of this review. In Pakistan, reactionary nuts are using Salman Rushdie—and the dead bodies of some true believers—to destabilize Benazir Bhutto's government. In Iran, the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, with Rocks in his Dome, has put out a $5.2 million contract on the novelist. In South Africa, Saudi Arabia and at Waldenbooks of Stamford, Connecticut, *The Satanic Verses* is banned. For a couple of minutes, let's try to see the book through the bonfires of its burning.

As much as Islam, Salman Rushdie blasphemes Thatcherism. He's unkind, too, to V.S. Naipaul. "Pitting levity against gravity," altogether impious, *The Satanic Verses* is one of those go-for-broke "metafictions"—a grand narrative and a Monty Python sendup of history, religion and popular culture; Hindu cyclic and Moslem dualistic; postcolonial identity crisis and modernist pastiche; Bombay bombast and stiff-upper-lipo-suction; babu baby talk and ad agency neologism; cinema gossip, elephant masks, pop jingles, lousy puns, kinky sex and *Schadenfreude*; a sort of *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid* in Doris Lessing's *The Four-Gated City*—from which the sly-boots Author-God tip-and-twinkletoes away with a cannibal grin. "Who am I?" he asks us. "Let's put it this way: who has the best tunes?"

As we shall see, he's disingenuous. And already, like the Mojtabais and Mukherjees, I've made the novel sound as daunting as the kipper that the poor displaced protagonist Chamcha has to face, so many miles from home, at his first appalling public-schoolboy breakfast: "England was a peculiar-tasting smoked fish full of spikes and bones, and nobody would ever tell him how to eat it." How, indeed?

Saladin Chamcha and Gibreel Farishta were both born in Bombay; they are equally inauthentic. Chamcha leaves the "vulgarity" of Bombay for the "poise and moderation" of England, where he eats kippers, marries the blond and well-bred Pamela, co-hosts a popular children's TV program called *The Aliens Show* and turns himself into the Man of a Thousand Voice-Overs: "If you wanted to know how your ketchup bottle should talk in its television commercial, if you were unsure as to the ideal voice for your packet of garlic-flavoured crisps, he was your very man. He made carpets speak in warehouse advertisements, he did celebrity impersonations, baked beans, frozen peas. On the radio he could convince an audience that he was Russian, Chinese, Sicilian, the President of the United States." From Pamela he wants a child, but can't have one. He is a mimic man.

Gibreel stays home to star on the big Indian screen, and in various Bombay bedrooms. When he isn't pretending to be Hanuman the monkey king "in a sequence of adventure movies that owed more to a certain cheap television series emanating from Hong Kong than it did to the Ramayana," he incarnates "with absolute conviction, the countless deities of the subcontinent in the popular genre movies known as 'theologicals.' . . . Blue-skinned as Krishna he danced, flute in hand, amongst the beauteous gopis and their udder-heavy cows; with upturned palms, serene, he meditated (as Guatama) upon humanity's suffering beneath a studio-rickety bodhi-tree." Recovering from a mysterious Christ-like hemorrhage, he will fall in love with the Everest-climbing ice queen Alleluia Cone, and lose his faith.

Instead of kippers, Gibreel eats "the gammon steaks of his unbelief and the pig's trotters of secularism." He is an impostor.

Now, then: Chamcha and Gibreel, the mimic man and the impostor, are on their way from Bombay to "Mahagonny, Babylon, Alphaville"—better known as "Proper London, capital of Vilayet"—when their jumbo jet, the Bostan, is skyjacked by Sikh terrorists and blown up in mid-air, at 29,002 feet. This unlikely pair of pretenders, in a parable of the migration of peoples and souls, drop from a "Himalayan height" down "the hole that went to Wonderland," through

> a succession of cloudforms, ceaselessly metamorphosing, gods into bulls, women into spiders, men into wolves. Hybrid cloud-creatures pressed in upon them, gigantic flowers with human breasts dangling from fleshy stalks, winged cats, centaurs, and Chamcha in his semiconsciousness was seized by the notion that he, too, had acquired the quality of cloudiness, becoming metamorphic, hybrid.

Are they "just two brown men, falling hard, nothing so new about that, you may think; climbed too high, got above themselves"? Or are they fallen angels, "halfway between Allahgod and homosap . . . daring to ask forbidden things: antiquestions"? (As it happens, Būstān is Farsi for garden, as well as a poem by the Persian Sadi on Moslem virtues and the proper behavior of dervishes. "Vilayet," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, was a province of the Turkish empire in which well-behaved Ottomans got to go to school for three years if they passed a competitive exam. Twenty-nine thousand and two is almost as many feet as Mt. Everest. Was mountain-climber Cone named for a much smaller, sacred hill in Mecca, or is Rushdie just setting up a later pun on "the ice queen Cone"? For that matter, when the mimic man Chamcha marries "Pamela," isn't he, sort of like Naipaul, marrying the English novel? And so on.)

Anyway, Chamcha and Gibreel land in a swamp in Sussex presided over by a crazy woman. And Chamcha has turned into a goat. He may also be the devil, Shaitan. But what he looks like to white England—with his horns, hooves and tail—is Everywog. As a manticore explains to him on the night of his escape from the detention center for illegal immigrants, to which Gibreel had betrayed him, "They have the power of description, and we succumb to the pictures they construct." Underground in Vilayet, Chamcha will see his new image become an icon of the underclass. Asians and West Indians, with a lot of help from the police, will riot about race. Although, after some funny business with waxworks in a nightclub, Chamcha will metamorphose once more, by rage, into Shakespeare's Iago, he won't really learn anything interesting about himself until he returns to Bombay for the death of his father and the bed of an old girlfriend, the opinionated Zeeny Vakil.

This is overmuch symbolic baggage for any one character to carry around, but it's nothing compared to the burdens of Gibreel. Gibreel acquires a halo. He may be the Archangel Gabriel, through whom God posted messages to the Prophet. On the other hand, he behaves more like Azraeel, the exterminating "agent of God's wrath," come to burn down Proper London. On the third hand, having played so many gods in the low-budget "theologicals," maybe he's just crazy. He has terrible dreams: "The universe of his

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nightmares had begun to leak into his waking life, and if he was not careful he would never manage to begin again, to be reborn with her, through her, Alleluia, who had seen the roof of the world." These bad dreams are what got Rushdie into deep Shiite:

1) In the ancient sand-city of Jahilia, a Mohammed-like businessman/prophet named Mahound seems to be making up his messages from God—or Gabriel, or Shaitan—to suit his political convenience in a hairshirt-pulling fight with the local matriarchal deities Uzza, Manat and Al-Lat. Even these "satanic verses" are fiddled with, whimsically, by his scribe. Meanwhile, in the local brothel, the girls take the names of Mahound's many wives, to spice up their profane business.

2) In the semimodern Titlipur, in the shade of a banyan tree so immense that "the growth of tree into village and village into tree had become so intricate that it was impossible to differentiate between the two," the beautiful, orphaned and epileptic Ayesha also hears voices and, wearing nothing but a cloud of butterflies, leads the credulous villagers on a pilgrimage to Mecca that ends in death by drowning.

3) In a modern imperial city, an Imam plots the overthrow of a Middle Eastern state run by a Westernized and secular-minded empress, whom he accuses of "sexual relations with lizards" and whom he confuses with a mother-goddess: "History is the blood-wine that must no longer be drunk. History the intoxicant, the creation and possession of the Devil, of the great Shaitan, the greatest of the lies—progress, science, rights—against which the Imam has set his face. History is a deviation from the Path, knowledge is a delusion, because the sum of knowledge was complete on the day Al-Lah finished his revelation to Mahound." And: "Burn the books and trust the Book; shred the papers and hear the Word." And, after the revolution: "Now every clock in the capital city of Desh begins to chime, and goes on unceasingly, beyond twelve, beyond twenty-four, beyond one thousand and one, announcing the end of Time, the hour that is beyond measuring, the hour of the exile's return, of the victory of water over wine, of the commencement of the Untime of the Imam."

Well, "Mahound" was a term of contempt used by the Crusaders, and in medieval Christian mystery plays, to animadvert Mohammed; he is always a satanic figure. The Jahilia brothel, a "tent of Black Stone called The Curtain," sounds a lot like Ka'aba, regarded by the

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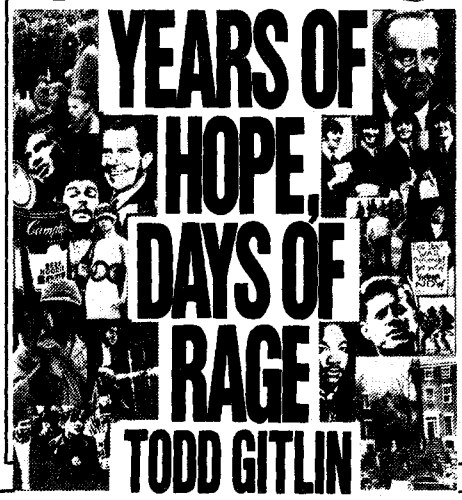

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faithful as the only consecrated spot on earth. And the scribe who fiddles in the desert with the text of the Koran is "a bum from Persia" whose name—surprise, surprise!—is Salman. And while the story of Ayesha, her butterflies and her lemming-like Exodus to Jonestown may derive from the Sufis and their moths, Ayesha was also the historical Mohammed's favorite wife. And she turns up yet again in the Imam dream, as the name of the despised Empress. The Imam, of course, is Khomeini, never notorious for his sense of humor.

Rushdie may say now whatever he wants to about "the fictional dream[s] of a fictional character, an Indian movie star, and one who is losing his mind at that." He can say that his book "isn't actually *about* Islam"; it's about, instead, "migration, metamorphosis, divided selves, love, death." But that's not what he was saying last fall. To Madhu Jain in the *India Today* of September 15: "Actually, one of my major themes is religion and fanaticism. I have talked about [Islam, which] I know the most about." To Shrabani Basu in the September 18 edition of *Sunday*: "It is a serious attempt to write about religion and revelation from the point of view of a secular person. . . . Besides, Mohammed is a very interesting figure. He's the only prophet who exists even remotely inside history."

I'm not saying that for this impudence Rushdie deserves Khomeini's eleventh-century sort of criticism by assassination. I *am* saying he has played fast and loose. ("Writers and whores," observes his own Mahound: "I see no difference here.") Having said that, let me add I'm sorry that so much attention's been paid to less than a third of the novel and so little to the rest of it, which has brilliant things to say about the hatred of women in history; the triumph of the machinery of images—in movies, television and advertising—over ancient myth, classical literature and political science; the displacement and deracination of the modern intelligence in a world of permanent migration and mindless hybridizing; the loss of self and death of love in a time without decency or roots; wog-bashing in the racist theocracy of the Mad Thatcher.

Talk about your Imams. Listen to this, from one of the New Men, an ad exec:

> Maggie the Bitch. . . . She's radical all right. What she wants—what she actually thinks she can fucking *achieve*—is literally to invent a whole goddamn new middle class in this country. Get rid of the old woolly incompetent buggers from fucking Surrey and Hampshire, and bring in the new. People without background, without history. Hungry people. People who really *want* and who know that with her, they can bloody well *get*. Nobody's ever tried to replace a whole fucking *class* before, and the amazing thing is she might just do it if they don't get her first. The old class. The dead men. . . . And it's not just the businessmen. The intellectuals, too. Out with the whole faggoty crew. In with the hungry guys with the wrong education. New professors, new painters, the lot. It's a bloody revolution. Newness coming into this country that's stuffed full of fucking old *corpses*. It's going to be something to see.

Who's left out of this revolution? Certainly Chamcha. He may have married Pamela because of her voice, "composed of tweeds, headscarves, summer pudding, hockey-sticks, thatched houses, saddle-soap, house-parties, nuns, family pews, large dogs and philistinism"; because, as she says, "I was bloody Britannia. Warm beer, mince pies, commonsense and me." But, having fallen from the sky and found his brown face, Chamcha's welcome only in Asian ghettos like Brickhall High Street, in cafes like the Shaandaar, among the pista barfi and jalebis, the chaloo chai and vegetable samosas. "What's a pachy?" asks Alleluia Cone, herself the daughter of death-camp survivors. A news vendor tells her: "A brown Jew."

Also left out will be Mimi Mamoulian, Chamcha's partner in mimicry and impersonation: "I have read *Finnegans Wake* and am conversant with post-modernist critiques of the West, e.g., that we have here a society capable only of pastiche: a 'flattened' world. When I become the voice of a bottle of bubble bath, I am entering Flatland knowingly, understanding what I'm doing and why." Owing to "upheavals of Armenian-Jewish history," Mimi has an "excessive need for rooting." She owns "a Norfolk vicarage, a farmhouse in Normandy, a Tuscan bell-tower, a sea-coast in Bohemia. 'All haunted. . . . Clanks, howls, blood on the rugs, women in nighties, the works. Nobody gives up land without a fight.'" There will be, nevertheless, no place for Mimi to hide.

Nor for Alleluia. Her father kills himself, like Primo Levi: "Why does a survivor of the camps live forty years and then complete the job the monsters didn't get done? Does great evil eventually triumph, no matter how strenuously it is resisted? Does it leave a sliver of ice in the blood, working its way through until it hits the heart? Or, worse: can a man's death be incompatible with his life?" She has read "that as part of their natural processes of combustion, the stars in the skies crushed carbon into diamonds. The idea of the stars raining diamonds into the void: that sounded like a miracle." It is toward this miracle that she climbs, as high up as her lover, Gibreel, falls, and she can't hide there, either.

What's going on? History is out of control, and metamorphosis, too. We've left home once too often. No more avatars of Vishnu. Instead of rising out of the ashes like a phoenix or resurrecting like a Christ, we are reborn, devolved, into parody, bloody farce, false consciousness, bad faith. Like Mimi, we are haunted. Like Gibreel, our nightmares leak. Like Chamcha, we are on the run. What we see on the streets of Jahilia the night Mahound prevails are "men and women in the guise of eagles, jackals, horses, gryphons, salamanders, warthogs, rocs; welling up from the murk of the alleys have come two-headed amphisbaenae and the winged bulls known as Assyrian sphinxes. Djinns, houris, demons. . . . Slayers of manticores, water-terrorists." Or in London the night the goat-Chamcha escapes from Immigration: "men and women who were also partially plants, or giant insects, or even, on occasion, built partly of brick or stone; there were men with rhinoceros horns instead of noses and women with necks as long as any giraffe. The monsters ran quickly, silently, to the edge of the . . . compound, where the manticore and other sharp-toothed mutants were waiting by the large holes they had bitten into the fabric of the containing fence."

Talk about alienation! After all of Rushdie's cultural anthropology and depth psychology, comparative religion and apocalyptic politics, World Lit-looting and show-biz pratfall—his razzle-dazzle with the likes of Lucretius, Ovid, Shakespeare, Joyce, Beckett, Eliot, Nabokov; Bentham and Gramsci, Dickens and Naipaul, William Blake and Omar Khayyám, Henry James and Frantz Fanon, *Ubu Roi* and *The Wizard of Oz*, *Dr. Strangelove* and Jerry della Femina—we end up, all of us, hungry for meaning, demanding to be made new, condemned instead, like Chamcha, to *The Aliens Show*:

> It was a situation comedy about a group

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> of extraterrestrials ranging from cute to psycho, from animal to vegetable, and also mineral, because it featured an artistic space-rock that could quarry itself for its raw material, and then regenerate itself in time for the next week's episode; this rock was named Pygmalien, and owing to the stunted sense of humour of the show's producers there was also a coarse, belching creature like a puking cactus that came from a desert planet at the end of time: this was Matilda, the Australien, and there were the three grotesquely pneumatic, singing space sirens known as the Alien Korns, maybe because you could lie down among them, and there was a team of Venusian hip-hoppers and subway spray-painters and soul-brothers who called themselves the Alien Nation, and under a bed in the space-ship that was the programme's main location there lived Bugsy the giant dung-beetle from the Crab Nebula who had run away from his father, and in a fish-tank you could find Brains the super-intelligent giant abalone who liked eating Chinese, and then there was Ridley, the most terrifying of the regular cast, who looked like a Francis Bacon painting of a mouthful of teeth waving at the end of a sightless pod, and who had an obsession with the actress Sigourney Weaver.

We've come all this way in as much of a mess as *The Satanic Verses* itself, and I haven't told you anything about the sex and violence, or what you probably want to know about Pamela and Alleluia and Chamcha's father and Gibreel's producer, not to mention Dr. Uhuru Simba and Jumpy Joshi and the Granny Ripper and the race riot and the *Othello* subplot and the female Sikh terrorist and the satirical poet Baal. Nor do I intend to. Somewhere along the line, maybe in "the secret chamber of the clavichords," Rushdie lost control of his novel the way I've lost control of this review. *The Satanic Verses* lacks the ravening power, the great gulp, of *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*. It bites off the heads of its characters instead of digesting their essences. It has far too much on its troubled mind to make a symphonic noise out of so many discords. Nevertheless, of course, in its huge dishevelment, its *Leaves of Grass* lurchings and scourges, whistles and vapors, belly laughs and belly-flops, it is infinitely more interesting than those hundreds of neat little novels we have to read between Rushdies.

Is there a way out of his cycles that devolve into lesser selves, meaner societies and deathward-spinning metaphysical systems? One suggestion, though I'm not sure how seriously it's intended, shows up in a book by Zeeny Vakil, Chamcha's Bombay art critic girlfriend (and the most interesting and least developed character in the novel): *The Only Good Indian* lambastes "the confining myth of authenticity, that folkloristic straitjacket which she sought to replace by an ethic of historically validated eclecticism, for was not the entire national culture based on the principle of borrowing whatever clothes seemed to fit, Aryan, Mughal, British, take-the-best-and-leave-the-rest?" It's Zeeny who tells Chamcha to get real: "We're right in front of you. You should try and make an adult acquaintance with this place, this time. Try and embrace this city, as it is, not some childhood memory that makes you both nostalgic and sick."

But this seems far too straightforward for a metafiction. I'm not positive, but I think Rushdie is proposing something more botanical. When, in Gibreel's dream of Mecca and drowning, the Titlipur villagers leave their mothering banyan tree, they perish. Then there is, for Chamcha, "the tree of his own life," the walnut tree his father planted "with his own hands on the day of the coming of the son." Chamcha explains this tree to Zeeny: "Your birth-tree is a financial investment of a sort. When a child comes of age, the grown walnut is comparable to a matured insurance policy; it's a valuable tree, it can be sold, to pay for weddings, or a start in life. The adult chops down his childhood to help his grown-up self. The unsentimentality is appealing, don't you think?" As usual, Chamcha's missed the point. For his father, that tree was where his son's soul lived while the boy himself was far away, pursuing his unrequited love affair with England. Many pages later, Chamcha will watch a television program on gardening, and witness what's called a "chimeran graft," in which two trees—mulberry? laburnum? broom?—are bred into one:

> a chimera with roots, firmly planted in and growing vigorously out of a piece of English earth: a tree, he thought, capable of taking the metaphoric place of the one his father had chopped down in a distant garden in another, incompatible world. If such a tree were possible, then so was he: he, too, could cohere, send down roots, survive. Amid all the televisual images of hybrid tragedies—the uselessness of mermen, the failures of plastic surgery, the Esperanto-like vacuity of much modern art, the Coca-Colonization of the planet—he was given this one gift.

For this, they want to kill him. □

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Malinowski's Nephews

MICAELA DI LEONARDO

THE PREDICAMENT OF CULTURE: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art. *By James Clifford. Harvard University Press. 346 pp. $30. Paper $15.95.*

WORKS AND LIVES: The Anthropologist as Author. *By Clifford Geertz. Stanford University Press. 149 pp. $19.95.*

Anthropology and politics have had a difficult and contradictory relationship since the discipline was formalized at the turn of the century. The very basis of cultural anthropological research was the establishment of mutually respectful, face-to-face social relations between "primitive" people and the anthropologist—the vaunted participant-observer method. The anthropologist so sensitively participating and observing, however, usually appeared on the "primitive" stage after a ragtag assembly of other Europeans—explorers, missionaries, artists, adventurers and, of course, official colonists. Often he or she was an integral cog in the colonizing machine: E.E. Evans-Pritchard, for example, arrived in Nuerland in the then-Anglo-Egyptian Sudan at government request in 1940-41, on the heels of a pacification campaign. Thus Talal Asad noted in 1973 that anthropology was literally founded upon a "colonial encounter."

Within the framework of that continuing encounter, anthropologists have chosen to play divergent public political roles: apologist for and adviser to empire; advocate for the oppressed; theorist of revolutionary movements and regimes. In American anthropology, Franz Boas fought against numerous opponents to establish the study of racial difference as a cultural, not biological phenomenon and to attack—in the pages of *The Nation*—some American anthropologists for acting as spies in Central America during World War I. During the Vietnam War, in programs like Project Camelot, some anthropologists offered information on the potential for subversion among various Third World populations in return for Department of Defense funding. Others, such as Eric Wolf, participated in the campus teach-in movement and helped establish a school of peasant studies that attacked the blame-the-victim pieties of modernization theory and interpreted peasant protest and rebellion sympathetically.

In general, though, American anthropologists have tended to perceive themselves as scholars outside, or above, the political fray, although they tend to go against the conservative, isolationist grain. Many are profoundly attached to one or more foreign populations and act as their American advocates and translators, if only in the classroom. European and American ethnographers also have done fieldwork in their own societies over the past century, but such work at present has far less cachet, despite an upsurge of interest in Native Americans and in urban American anthropology, in the 1970s. Translating the experience of "being there" for the rest of us "here," as Clifford Geertz puts it, has been widely understood to be fundamental to the discipline.

But now the easy meanings of "here" and "there" have become problematic for a cohort of anthropologists I will label the "ethnography as text" school, after an article with that title by George Marcus and Dick Cushman. This school, of which the two books under review are very different recent examples, draws largely from literary-critical and French poststructuralist theory to focus attention away from *doing* fieldwork—going there, interacting with and trying to interpret the thoughts and actions of others—to the *product* of the fieldwork experience, the ethnographic text. The anthropologists in this school, including Renato Rosaldo, George Marcus and Paul Rabinow, want us to abandon the notion that ethnographies are scientific reports that concern humans and culture rather than whales, bacteria or black holes, and to see them instead as fictions, texts that are carefully constructed to have particular effects. Ethnographies are alive with common denominator people—individuals whom the ethnographer chooses to represent the cultural message of entire populations. And they are often allegorical, constructed to tell particular moral tales about the meaning of cultural differences and commonalities between the West and the rest.

James Clifford is known not for ethnography but for theoretical work on the meanings of ethnographic authority and ethnographic allegory. *The Predicament of Culture* brings together a dozen of his highly influential pieces which, except one, have appeared over the past eight years in anthologies and in art and academic journals. These articles treat a wide range of topics, from a Cape Cod courtroom trial on Native American tribal authenticity, to the Museum of Modern Art's Primitivism in Twentieth-Century Art show, to the related writings of a number of artists and anthropologists. They are united by Clifford's broad vision of anthropology as part of intellectual and political history and by his particular understanding of the "predicament of a postcolonial ethnography." Anthropological writing, Clifford asserts, was characterized by "a set of roles and discursive possibilities that may be called ethnographic liberalism." The certainties of First World power undergirding ethnographic liberalism have been eroded by the rise of Third World independence and by "a drastic expansion of mobility, including tourism, migrant labor, immigration, urban sprawl."

Clifford asserts that we in the West perceive the increasingly internationalized world as homogenizing, degrading—as losing markers of authentic cultural difference. He wishes instead "to displace any transcendent regime of authenticity" and to make us aware that all anthropological knowledge is the product of an "unruly dialogical encounter" in which anthropologist and [illegible] like experience change. Notions of the primitive, of authentic cultural meanings, are themselves Western constructs.

In "Histories of the Tribal and the Modern," Clifford addresses the structuring and implications of MoMA's 1984 Primitivism show. He criticizes the museum's use of African art without any consideration of its context and native meaning; museum-goers are assumed to be interested in so-called primitive art only insofar as it may have inspired the "modernist primitivism" of Picasso and the rest. But others have made this point: It is, as Clifford would say, simply an extension of ethnographic liberalism. Clifford goes further, pointing out that not only the MoMA show but the Natural History Museum's Hall of Pacific Peoples are examples of "the rest-

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less desire and power of the modern West to collect the world." But cultural imperialism not only arrogates to the West the power to stockpile the material culture of the rest; in so doing it relegates non-Western peoples to a vanishing past and "airbrushes out" both long histories of Western contact and the complex, syncretistic present. "No Samoan men at the kava ceremony are wearing wristwatches" in the Pacific peoples photos, though they do in reality. Clifford asks us to imagine museum exhibits that represent the complex, "inauthentic" lives of exotic others. In one of his illustrative photos a New Guinea girl smiles up at us, bedecked with traditional headnet—and a necklace of flash bulbs.

Clifford further questions our notions of human order in his appreciative and critical review of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. He sympathizes with Said's project of attacking a body of Western work that defines and objectifies the East. But he points out that Said is hoist with his own petard. Said hovers between attacking others' characterizations of the (Middle Eastern) Orient, and asserting his own. And he objectifies Orientalists themselves, excluding those schools of scholarship whose concerns and tone do not fit his model of the Orientalist. In the end, Clifford identifies with Said's dilemma: "Should criticism work to counter sets of culturally produced images such as those of Orientalism with more 'authentic' or more 'human' representations? Or if criticism must struggle against the procedures of representation itself, how is it to begin? . . . These are fundamental issues—inseparably political and epistemological—raised by Said's work."

James Clifford's heartfelt concerns with the political implications of scholarly work are not necessarily shared by all "ethnography as text" confreres. Clifford Geertz, a generation older, is less a confrere than a hallowed white father or revered uncle. Geertz's early ethnographic work on Indonesia and Morocco reflected the can-they-catch-up-with-us premises of modernization theory. He later became a founder of "interpretive anthropology," a precursor to the current movement. His vision of cultures as texts to be "thickly described" and thus "read" by the analyst has had a profound influence outside anthropology, particularly among cultural historians. But in *Works and Lives*, he reflects the political unconcern of some in the new school. While Clifford's and Geertz's works have superficially common interests—ethnographies as texts, a focus on the accomplishments of anthropologists of past generations—the two books are in some ways as different as chalk and cheese. Where Clifford is tortured, serious and weighted down by past scholarship, Geertz is breezy and travels light. But *Works and Lives* is a deceptively easy read. From the title on, with its allusions to Hesiod and Plutarch, this carefully defined "literary" study of the works of four classic ethnographers—Evans-Pritchard, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Bronislaw Malinowski and Ruth Benedict—bristles with half-acknowledged references and meanings.

On the acknowledged level of meaning: Geertz intends *Works and Lives* to stand as an embodiment of the utility of considering ethnographies as literary texts. He offers original and insightful readings of works long pored over. Lévi-Strauss's *Tristes Tropiques* is not one but many "co-occurring, competing . . . interfering texts"—travelogue, ethnography, philosophical text, reformist tract, literary polemic. "The point, the overriding point" of Evans-Pritchard's extraordinarily clear, deceptively transparent prose, "is to demonstrate that nothing, no matter how singular, resists reasoned description." Malinowski's texts project two antithetical personae: "the Absolute Cosmopolite," a figure with near-infinite "capacities for adaptability and fellow-feeling," and the Complete Investigator, "a figure . . . rigorously objective, dispassionate, thorough, exact, and disciplined." Benedict's writing goal was "edificatory ethnography" and her major rhetorical strategy was the "juxtaposition of the all-too-familiar and the wildly exotic in such a way that they change places."

Ultimately, though, Geertz is uninterested in the historical bequest of three of the four ethnographers' works. He sees Evans-Pritchard, Levi-Strauss and Benedict as politically and theoretically passé. Only the contradictory romantic/scientist Malinowski's texts have historical significance for contemporary ethnographers.

Here is the hidden layer of Geertz's meaning. He is playing avuncular Hesiod the farmer, good-humoredly dispensing plowing advice to his ethnographic nephews, all the while pretending that they are not his, but Malinowski's. These poor souls, through their theoretical concern with language, power and text, have contracted "epistemological hypochondria," are suffering from "endemic 'diary disease'" and have thus produced work Geertz finds lacking: "author-saturated" texts suffused with a "strong

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note of disquiet." Health, Geertz counsels, can be regained by jettisoning these theoretical and political concerns, accepting the vertiginous reality of textuality—"it can . . . be gotten used to"—and acceding to a relativistic anthropological world in which you too can produce classic ethnographies. "All that is needed is comparable art." *Ars gratia artis.*

There is certainly a kernel of rather arrogant truth in Geertz's sugar pill nostrums. Ethnographies *are* texts, and thus are more or less well constructed. But they are more than texts, they do more than simply "enlarge the sense of how life can go"—Geertz's delineation of anthropology's mandate. They are bound up with the enmeshed political histories of the three worlds, to which Geertz only nominally attends. Consider, for example, Geertz versus Clifford in their treatment of Lévi-Strauss's work. Geertz, the old New Critic, looks at the text and only the text. He admires, he pokes fun, he dismisses. Clifford, the New Historicist, offers Lévi-Strauss's vision of the Indian in full headdress who in the 1940s sat near him in the American Room of the New York Public Library, taking notes with a Parker pen. For Lévi-Strauss, the Indian "can appear only as a survival or a kind of incongruous parody." But Clifford sets the Indian—and Lévi-Strauss—in historical perspective, explaining that at the time the government's new Indian policy had "actively encouraged tribal reorganization all over the country." In Edward Said's terms, Clifford gives us the text, the world and the critic. With Geertz we get only the text and the critic.

At its best, the ethnography as text movement sets anthropological history within many other histories—those of evolving Western art, larger intellectual trends and the separate but related histories of colonized and now neocolonized Third World states. We gain a vision of how the West has constructed the rest, and, perhaps more important, of the varieties of Third World response. What is lacking in the movement is cognizance of the insights and contributions of other groups of anthropologists who have been working on these issues all along. Feminists, for example, have been woefully misunderstood; and the insight that "the rest" includes not only Third World but Western women—that the Western Other includes gender as well as race and class—has gone unheeded.

But most important, ethnography as text scholars tend to dismiss those who use a transformed Marxism to understand the changing material and cultural lives of those abroad and at home. For many, Marxism is just another redemptive allegory—a discarded "master narrative," declares Clifford. But if we cannot escape the cultural construction of reality, no more can we escape its sensuous material dimension. Marxist or "culture and political economy" anthropologists like Eric Wolf, Sidney Mintz, Jane Schneider, Rayna Rapp and many others, are not only concerned with how those they study cosmologically construe food, clothing and shelter. They also document exactly what sort and how much of these necessities are available, how shifts in global, national and regional economies help determine availability, and precisely how individuals act according to their own lights to improve their lot.

Nor can we escape our political and economic placement at home. It is significant that ethnography as text scholars tend to be most concerned with former French colonies, whose present conditions have little relevance for the evolving American empire, while culture and political economy scholarship flourishes in the United States' "backyard," the Caribbean and Latin America. The French connection makes sense, given the theoretical foundations of the ethnography as text school. But it can entail, for an American, a lack of self-reflection, as intellectual and citizen, about one's material and ideological connections to current imperial enterprises. Awareness of that connection entails what C. Wright Mills more than a generation ago named the sociological imagination—the ability to perceive aggregate human material and cultural patterns. The colonial encounter, in its myriad present forms, must be seen as more than a series of "unruly dialogical encounters" between anthropologist and native. It is also the debt crisis, runaway shops, global factories and U.S.-trained death squads.

Idealist purblindness, then, is the major limitation of ethnography as text work. Texts are political, but they do not constitute the whole of politics. Near the conclusion of *Works and Lives*, Geertz remarks that "ethnography hasn't had to be aware of the sources of its power"—meaning, however, rhetorical force, not First World economic and political privileges. We need to be aware of both. □

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FILMS.

STUART KLAWANS

High Hopes
Carl Th. Dreyer

The realist tradition has always left itself room to admit the outlandish, the uncanny, the fantastic—witness the death by spontaneous combustion in *Bleak House.* Witness as well Mike Leigh's fascinating new film, *High Hopes.*

By turns droll and dour, broadly brushed and carefully rendered, *High Hopes* is in essence the story of a working-class London family. The widowed mother, at age 70, is starting to withdraw from the world. The daughter—tasteless, social-climbing, sex-starved and mythomaniacal—lives in the suburbs and gets along with nobody but her dog. That leaves the film's heart and mind with the son, Cyril, and with Shirley, his long-term lover.

These latter two are gut-level socialists, motivated more by class loyalty than ideology. Now in their mid-30s, with Thatcherism triumphant around them, they have all but abandoned the hope of political change. Their radicalism these days takes the form of sarcasm and an occasional visit to Marx's tomb—that, and a decency born of principle. The central conflict of *High Hopes* has to do with whether Cyril and Shirley can maintain their inner radicalism—call it a socially enlightened kindness—while their outward hopes die. Shirley has enough optimism left to want a baby. Cyril, though, may have become too embittered for that, creating a situation that is only too true to life. To a large extent the film presents this conflict in a predictably realistic manner. But then, to a large extent, it does not.

At any given moment, *High Hopes* seems ready to shift from portraiture to caricature, from head-on drama to oblique satire. In this it somewhat re-

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sembles *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*, though without that film's mercurial temperament. Here you will find no quick-tongued intellectuals, no firebombs, no magic-working street musicians. The working class in *High Hopes* is neither picturesque nor glib; it gets on with its life without the release of violence. But neither is this the foredoomed working class of, say, *This Sporting Life*, or the dozens of other pictures that turn cinematic realism into a trip through Ulro. The characters in *High Hopes* inhabit a world that is still full of surprises, as Leigh makes clear from the start.

Wandering in and out of the first half of the film is a provincial lad named Wayne, who has come to London because of an idiotic family quarrel and now cannot locate his only relative in town. Wayne is so unworldly that he seems never to have heard of taxicabs, so innocent that he expects to find well-paid work in London right away, so lost that he's got the number of his sister's apartment but has neglected to jot down the name of her street. Like a sad-eyed stray, he attaches himself to Cyril and Shirley, who offer him first tea and then a bed for the night. After imposing on his hosts for a few more scenes, Wayne leaves, almost as if he'd straggled in from some other movie.

The wonderful thing about *High Hopes* is that it doesn't really need Wayne but lets him stick around for a while anyway. It's similarly generous with the screen time given to a wealthy, stuck-up couple who live next door to Cyril's mother. Unlike Wayne, these monsters of gentrification actually advance the plot. But that seems almost a side benefit to Leigh, who can't seem to get enough of the sleek young Thatcherites. We find out about their friends, their eating habits, their taste in music, their sex games. It's all as buffoonish as if Brecht had dreamed it up in one of his less responsible moods.

But the neighbors seem restrained compared with Heather Tobias's portrayal of Cyril's sister, Valerie. Whooping with nervous laughter, skittering around the set like a wind-up toy, Tobias gives the sort of performance that in earlier days might have been turned in by Peter Sellers in drag. It's a remarkable act, as good in its way as Edna Doré's grimly believable Mrs. Bender, or the finely nuanced work of Philip Davis and Ruth Sheen as Cyril and Shirley. The disparity in styles is so great that when the latter three appear with Tobias, you almost get a split-screen effect, as if the frame could not contain both world views at once. That they *do* coexist is a tribute to Leigh, a filmmaker who knows that realism stops being real when it closes off the characters' world. To the best of my knowledge, he has not yet made any of his people spontaneously combust; but I wouldn't put it past him.

One of the functions of museums is to turn selected mortals into idols, of the sort known as artists. Made monumental and official, the persons so immortalized have their brains replaced with bibliographies and their hearts ripped out in favor of *catalogues raisonnés*, while teams of curators and administrators clamber through the hollow, Brobdingnagian limbs, causing echoes that awe the assembled throng. That's the usual procedure, anyway. In the case of the Museum of Modern Art's centennial retrospective of the work of Carl Dreyer, the intent has been exactly the opposite: to save this most revered of filmmakers from his reputation.

And a forbidding reputation it is. From the late 1920s until his death in 1968, the Danish master completed only five feature films. (A sixth, made in Sweden during World War II, he considered a failure and rejected from the canon.) This meagerness of output might have been enough in itself to make him a symbol of integrity. Add the merest summary of this later work, on which his image is based, and you already have the idolized Dreyer—austere, somber, transcendental:

The Passion of Joan of Arc (1928): a rigorously simplified reenactment of Joan's trial and death, shot almost entirely in close-up.

Vampire (1930): a shadowy, dreamlike film that owes as much to Edvard Munch as it does to Bram Stoker.

Day of Wrath (1943): a drama of Protestant witch-burnings in the seventeenth century.

Ordet (The Word) (1954): the story of a farm family whose son thinks he's Jesus.

And finally there is *Gertrud* (1964), made when Dreyer was in his 70s, the only one of his mature works, as the critic Elliott Stein has put it, in which the presence of God is not felt. Religion is entirely absent from the story—and so is love, even though the heroine can live for nothing else.

Taken together, these five later pictures have made Dreyer the model for a particular type of film art: slow, quiet, visually spare, with carefully restrained performances from the actors. That's true enough, as far as it goes. What's left out of this account, though—what MoMA has restored to audiences through its retrospective—is Dreyer the entertainer, the proto-feminist, the realist (in the full open-ended sense of the term). Here, at last, is the Dreyer who filmed a car chase.

He also shot a rustic comedy (*The Parson's Widow*), a fairy tale (the fragmentary *Once Upon a Time*), a lavish drawing-room melodrama with a beautifully handled homoerotic theme (*Michael*) and a drama about the Russian pogroms (*Love One Another*) that isn't far from the spirit of Warner Bros. during its social-consciousness period. Of Dreyer's earlier films, though, the one that seems to illuminate best the persistence of his themes and the evolution of his style is *Leaves From Satan's Book* (1919-21). To see this picture in the context of all his work is to understand Dreyer anew.

Based on a novel by Marie Corelli, the film is Dreyer's rather odd response to D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*. Like Griffith's film, it tells four different stories, from four historical epochs, linked by a common moral theme. Dreyer also makes a great effort, as does Griffith, to recreate each period authentically. But the underlying attitude toward both morali-

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THERE ARE REASONS

to imagine mountains rising
out of the dark, as the real ones
reveal themselves at dawn,
pink clouds giving way
to violet, blue.
In the imaginary mountains
a man who has tended sheep all day
is crossing a stream so cold
his ankles ache, but he stops
and stands in the current,
listening to birds call,
to the rustle of leaves
that might mean someone is coming,
a woman shining like light
through the sprinkled leaves.
But she has arrived from the real
mountain, and does not see him there,
sees stone and fern and mushrooms
ripe for gathering. She does not hear
a hawk's wings as he lands yards away
in a tree. She will fill her basket
in silence, while the man watches
from a distance, holding his breath,
the song inside him contained
by his skin, by the walls
of his heart, softly beating.

Susan Ludvigson

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ty and realism is startlingly different.

Griffith, with great self-confidence, cuts back and forth between the epochs, building up a dynamism that not only thrills the audience but also drives it to accept his message. He's like a tent preacher, or a Chautauqua showman, barraging the folks with gee-whiz facts till they yield to his point of view. If Dreyer labors to re-create each period, it's from a much different motivation: skepticism. He presents his epochs separately, as if acknowledging that historical accuracy is an illusion, which can be maintained only by keeping each story sealed off from the rest. Having been realized, the illusion is then abandoned, much as the film's one continuing character takes on appearances and then throws them off again. This character—the only figure in Dreyer's film to exhibit anything like Griffith's moral certainty—is Satan himself, who shows up through the ages disguised as a Pharisee, the Grand Inquisitor, a Jacobin and a charismatic Russian monk.

What is the result of Satan's preaching? In three stories out of the four, it is the death of an innocent woman. Here, then, in one of Dreyer's earliest films, we already have an elaboration of his most persistent theme: the struggle of women against powerful, righteous, rhetorically domineering men. This is the story Dreyer would tell again and again. In *Love One Another*, the heroine suffers because of the lies of a government agent (disguised as a monk!). In *Joan of Arc* and *Day of Wrath*, women are tortured and killed, and men are satisfied to see it happen because the proceedings are carefully written down. In *Gertrud*, the heroine, having brought inspiration to a poet, finds herself abandoned, while he becomes a great man to a nation of Boy Scouts, who praise him at official banquets for his championship of eros. Only in *Ordet* does a man actually bring his much-promised salvation to a woman—and then he can do it only because he has given up his claim to spiritual authority.

If there is indeed a religious theme running through Dreyer's work (and given his lifelong involvement with filming the story of Jesus, that would be hard to deny), it's an anticlerical religion that puts its faith in common things and emotions—what Dreyer thought of as the world of women—rather than in the ideas and institutions of men. And if his style evolved into something austere and somber, perhaps that wasn't because of a desire for transcendence but for the opposite reason, a trust in simplicity. His earlier films, such as *Satan's Book*, had a full-dress *mise en scène*. Then, as he went on, he began to strip away the trappings, as if determined to create his illusions with as much economy as possible. In this he was perhaps closer to Orson Welles than to Yasujiro Ozu and Robert Bresson, with whom he is more commonly compared. Like Welles, he knew the best special effects are often the simplest. And so in *Vampire* he created a moment more chilling than all the installments of *Poltergeist* combined, merely by having an actress smile. In *Day of Wrath*, the sound of a woman softly humming resounds more dramatically than any of John Williams's overblown scores. And in *Ordet* Dreyer carried off what may be the cinema's ultimate special effect: a convincing on-camera resurrection, using nothing more than the movement of a hand.

The Dreyer retrospective will continue at the Museum of Modern Art through March 5. It will then travel to the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the Pacific Film Archive, University Art Museum, Berkeley; Cleveland Cinémathèque; the American Film Institute, Washington, D.C.; the U.C.L.A. Film and Television Archive; the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Cinémathèque Québéçoise, Montreal; and Film in the Cities, Minneapolis. Don't miss the chance to see it—most of the obscure prints, on loan from the Danish Film Museum, will disappear again from the United States once the retrospective ends. And by all means try to see the program with Dreyer's car-chase film, *They Caught the Ferry* (1948). This short subject originated when the Danish government asked for ten or twelve minutes of propaganda to encourage safe driving. Dreyer responded with an expressionist-symbolist-minimalist extravaganza, which might very well have saved some lives. It's so gaga, audiences must have been too confused to drive after watching it and just walked home.

Department of Selective Quotation: Like all opinion-mongers, I would expect to find my words misappropriated from time to time, perhaps even in movie ads (" . . . highly . . . unusual . . . !"—*The Nation*). Imagine my shock, though, to find Norman Podhoretz quoting some character named Klawans in his *New York Post* column. The occasion was a defense of sexual morality, with a review of *Dangerous Liaisons* by said Klawans being brought in for support. Friends, I am no less alarmed than you would be to find Podhoretz on the near side of the trench. Let me therefore assure all readers of *The Nation*: I support not only free love but also woman suffrage and the forty-hour week. □

THEATER.

THOMAS M. DISCH

Born Yesterday
The Night Hank Williams Died
Falstaff

Reviewing plays on a weekly basis with a long lead-time can be a frustrating experience, especially when one has high praise for performers who've already taken their last bows, either because of a limited run or because vain, cruel and tyrannical critics and an indifferent public have made a thumbs-down decision. But it has its blessings, too, not least the chance to have the last word and to take the pronouncements of other critics to task. That last word may be, in its nature, ineffectual: My rave for last season's *Carrie* didn't save it from going down in history as the *Moose Murders* of musical comedies. But it has the advantage that dialogue possesses over monologue. When another critic misses the point of a play, that point often becomes easier to define by triangulating from reference to the mistake.

Take Frank Rich's *New York Times* review of the revival of Garson Kanin's *Born Yesterday* at the 46th Street Theatre. With commendable honesty he admits he can't understand why the play had its original success, one of the longest-ever Broadway runs for a non-musical. He speculates that it may represent that moment in history, just at the end of World War II, when Washington came into its own as a boomtown. He gives a quick précis of the plot, then draws what he thinks is the moral of the story:

> *Born Yesterday* believes there's nothing wrong with America that cannot be righted by an informed citizenry. Mr. Kanin's comedy is far more sanguine about the prospects of purging greed and corruption than are such related postwar dramas as Robert Sherwood's screenplay for *The Best Years of Our Lives* and Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*.

Indeed, as a blueprint for the reform of the Federal government, *Born Yesterday* is wanting, but such weighty matters aren't what the play is *about*; they are more in the nature of its setting, like the

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R	■	T	■	A	■	I	■	I	■	W	■	R	■	I
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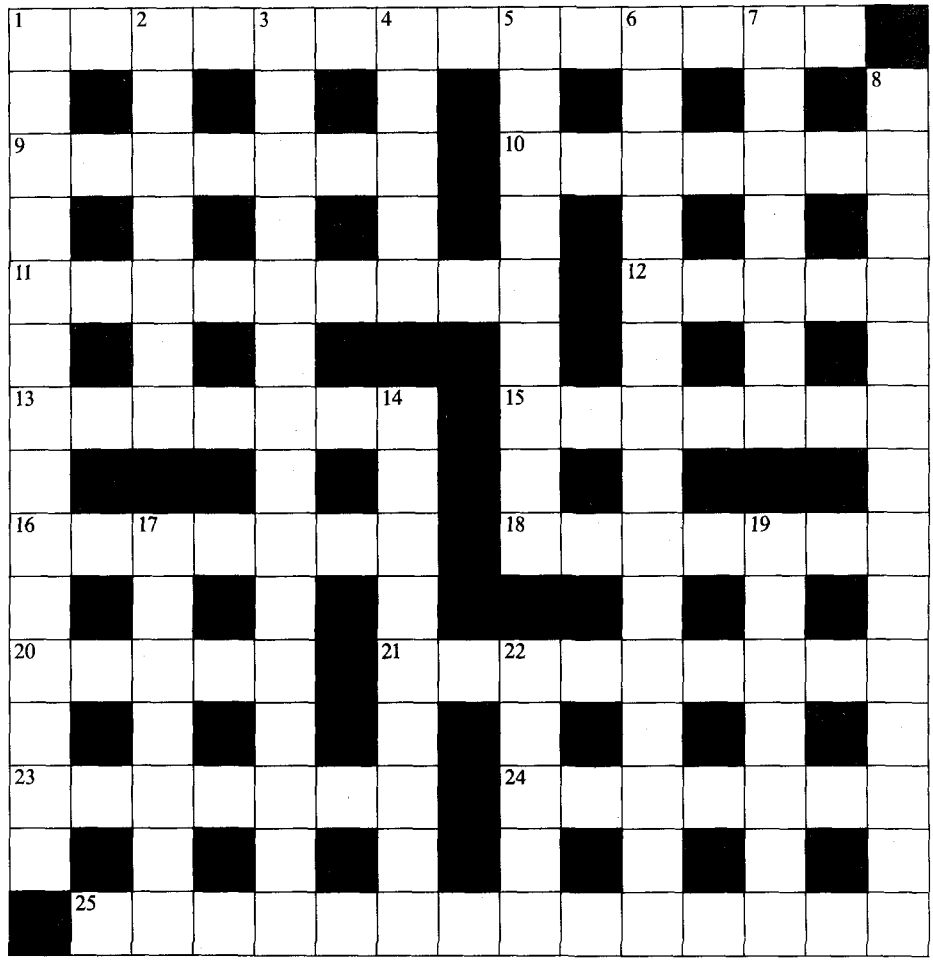
FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 If you want a good photograph, the subject probably shouldn't be so denigrated. (3,2,1,3,5)
9 In winter, I might expect to see it, though it might be a provisional arrangement. (7)
10 The clan Muridae—which most workers say they don't want to join? (One might win it by a whisker!) (3-4)
11 That messy mess that could prove to be valuable! (9)
12 Paul made one of them after seeing the light. (5)
13 You have to have the will to be this. (7)
15 Descriptive of one in such as 10 who didn't wind up in the money? (4-3)
16 I get in the middle of secret manipulations? Tells quite a tale! (7)
18 There should be a warning attached to any form of it. (7)
20 What she was told to do was just a put-on. (We'll all have the result of her efforts.) (5)
21 This flower doesn't seem appropriately placed in a bed. (4-5)
23 With the teeth on edge? (The user rated an exhibition there!) (7)
24 Signori! You'll have to make a translation, starting with the beginnings of it! (7)
25 The book doesn't talk about the other half of the would-be reassembly team. (3,3,5,3)

DOWN

1 One who likes people to be like Donahue, with the worker and his port confused. (14)
2 Those who make lacework out of rags? (7)
3 56 and a quarter degrees, in one sense—bridge opponents, according to seat order. (9,2,4)
4 A lousy afterthought, such as used to be read by the head investigator. (5)
5 With outstretched arms, Tad tried to show you this place in Germany. (9)
6 Holding one's attention, making notes like this? (8-7)
7 One saves more than one should, perhaps. (7)
8 One's station evidently isn't of primary importance with such a calling. (6-2-6)
14 Heels were run down, perhaps, but not here. (9)
17 A colorless oily liquid. (Fifty in such a musical society?) (7)
19 In place of brains, do you have this for a clue? (7)
22 Red hot in part of it, at least according to what Gunga Din might have had. (5)

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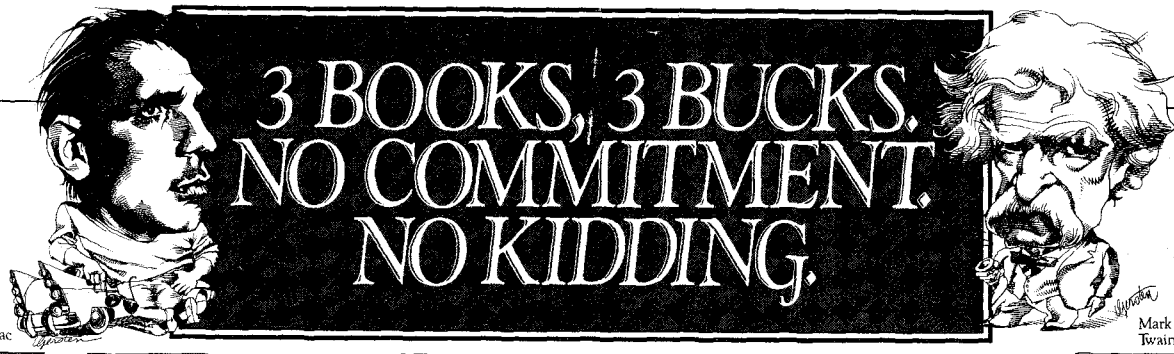

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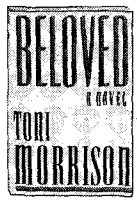

155. Toni Morrison's Pulitzer prize-winner. "Extraordinary"—N.Y. *Times*.
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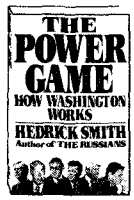

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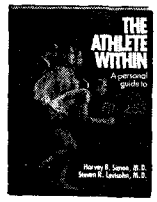

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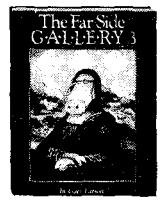

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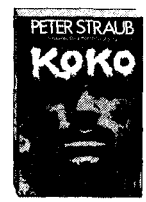

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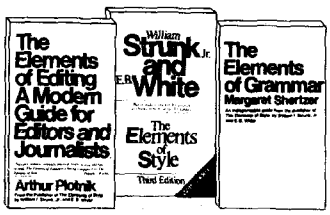
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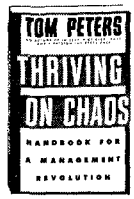

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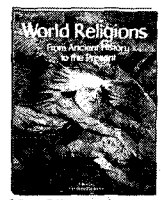

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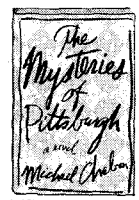

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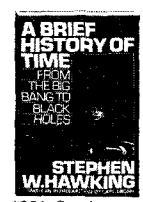

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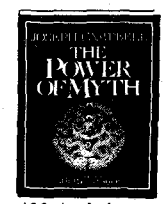

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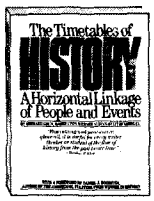

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